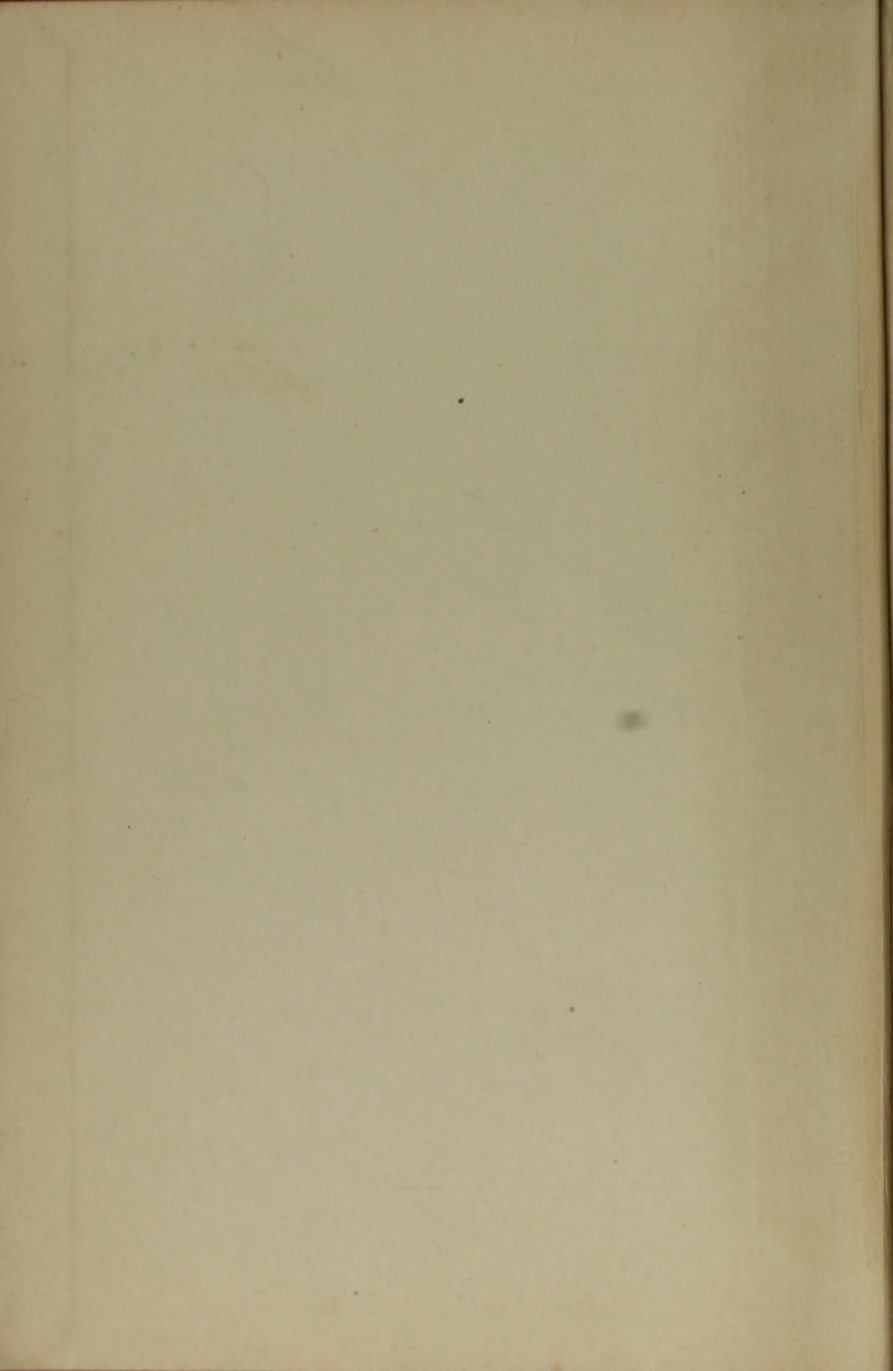


HEROES  
AND  
HEROISM  
IN  
COMMON  
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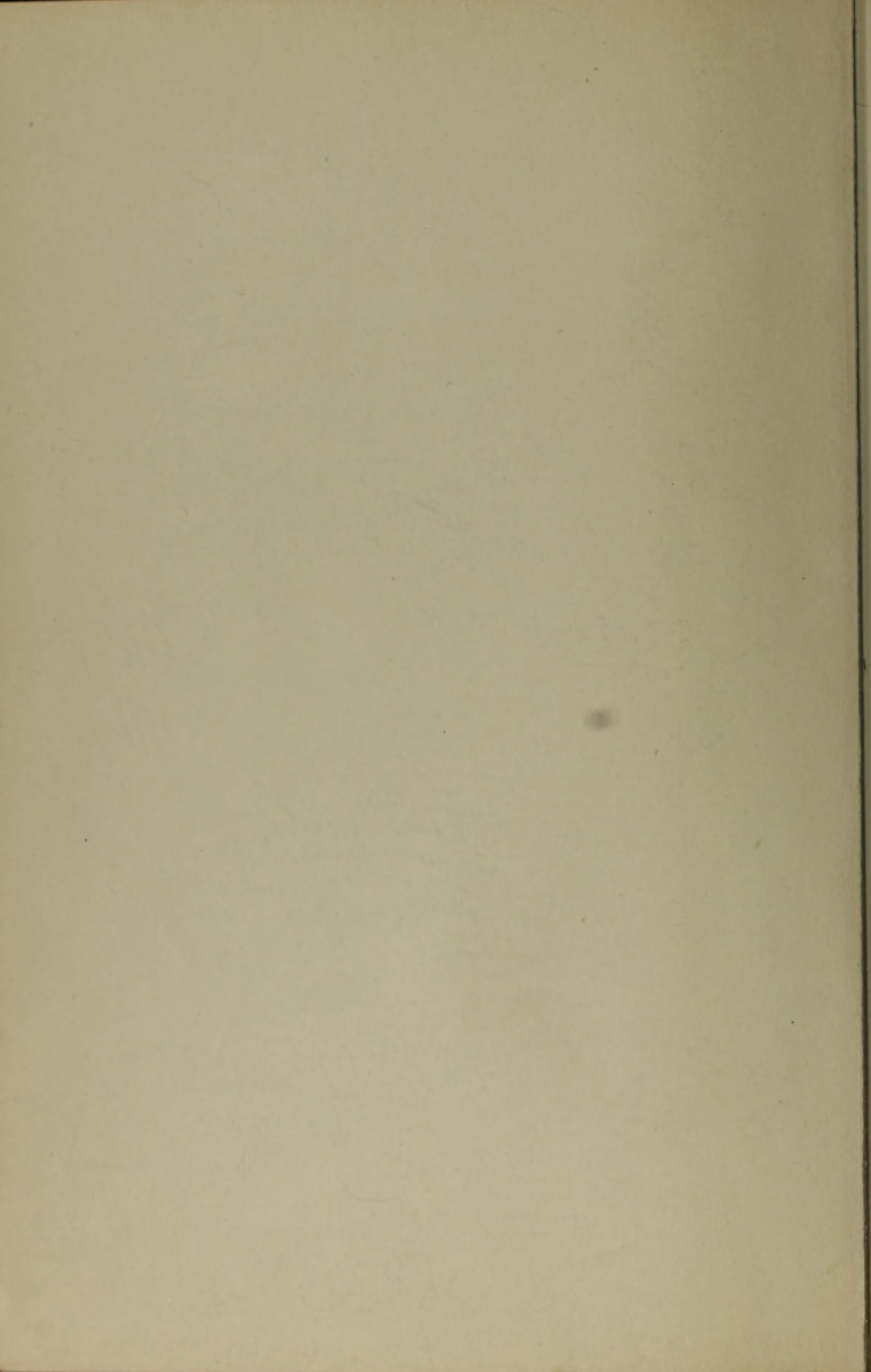








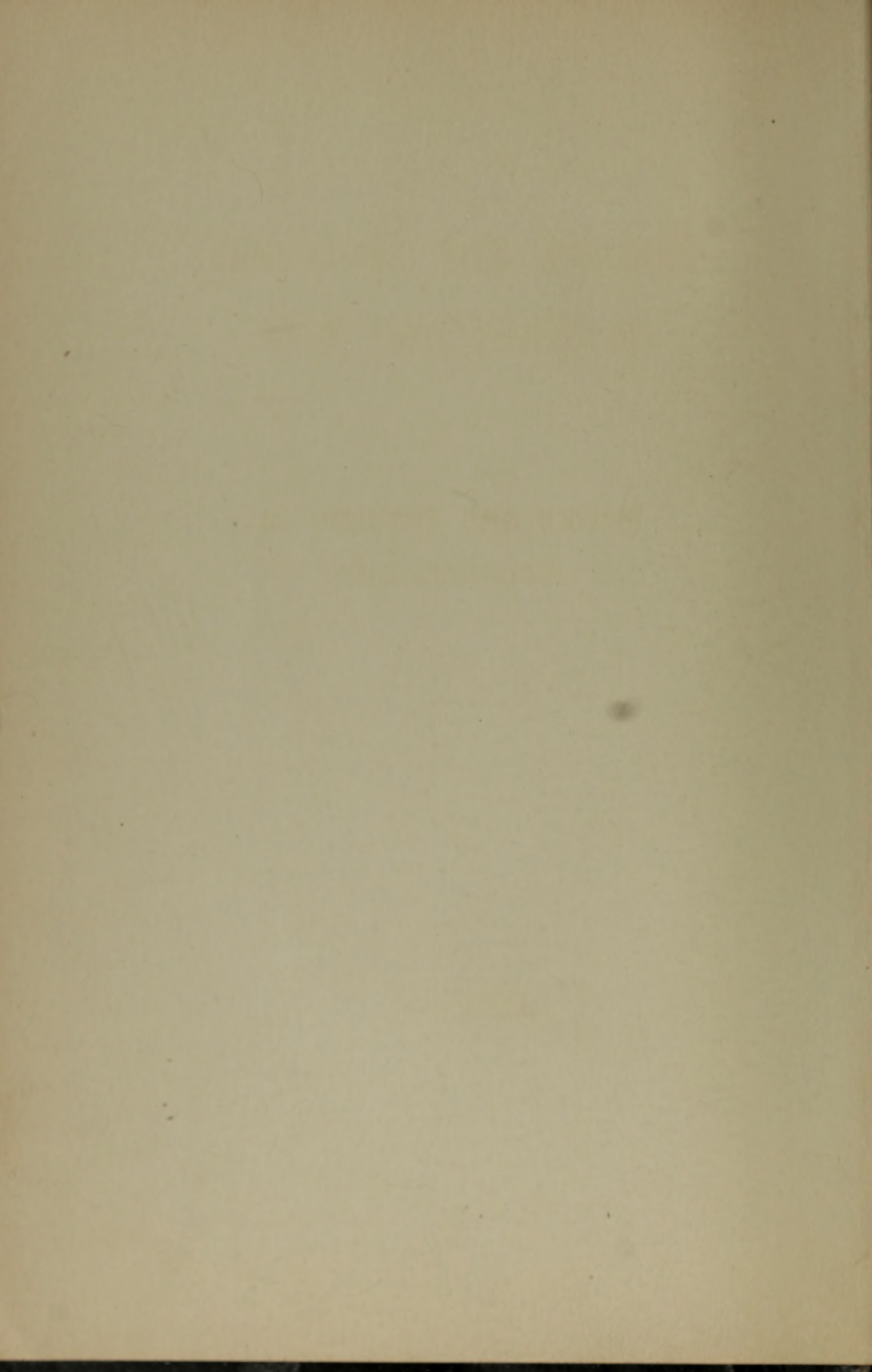














**Heroes and Heroism in  
Common Life**



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NEW YORK

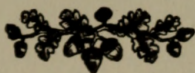


# Heroes and Heroism in Common Life

BY

N. MCGEE WATERS

AUTHOR OF "A YOUNG MAN'S RELIGION," ETC.



New York

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TO  
MY FATHER AND MOTHER  
WHO ALL THEIR LIVES  
HAVE DWELT AMONG THE FIELDS  
IS THIS BOOK DEDICATED IN  
GRATEFUL AFFECTION



*“ Full many a gem of purest ray serene  
The dark unfathom'd caves of ocean bear:  
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,  
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.”*



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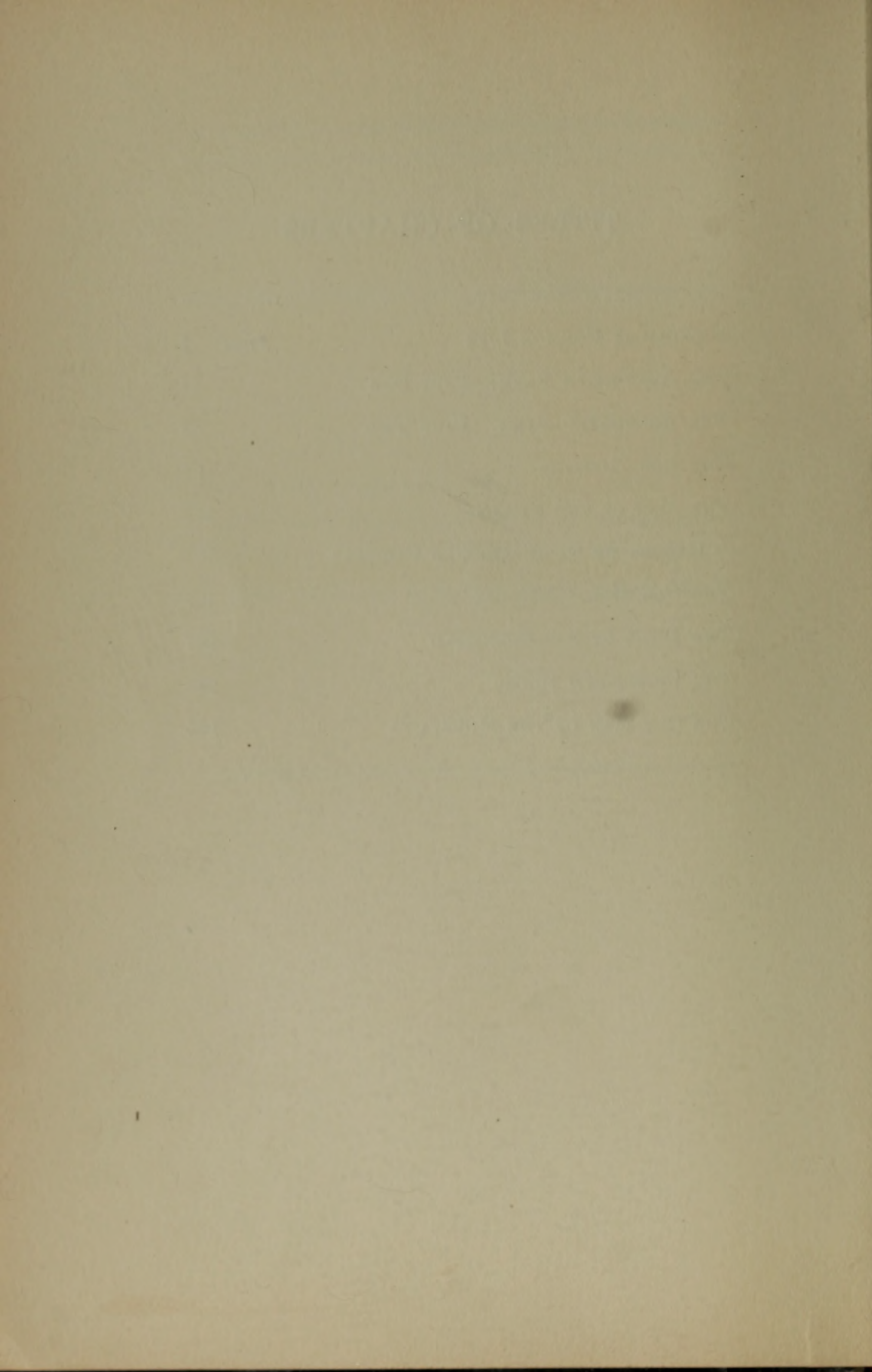
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## Heroism in Common Life

[1]



*"O Friend! I know not which way I must look  
For comfort, being, as I am, opprest,  
To think that now our Life is only drest  
For show; mean handy-work of craftsman, cook,  
Or groom! We must run glittering like a Brook  
In the open sunshine, or we are unblest:  
The wealthiest man among us is the best;  
No grandeur now in nature or in book  
Delights us. Rapine, avarice, expense,  
This idolatry; and these we adore:  
Plain living and high thinking are no more:  
The homely beauty of the good old cause  
Is gone; our peace, our fearful innocence,  
And pure religion breathing household laws."*

—WORDSWORTH.



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## Heroism in Common Life

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OR one half of his life, the boy longs to be a man; then, for the other half, the man longs to be a boy again.' This is another way of saying, that it is only when we are old that we appreciate the values of youth.

Every man, who has ever achieved, knows how true it is that the heart of his greatness, however much or little it is, lies in his obscure days and not in his famous ones. What men call fame, or wealth, is only the belated recognition of what the man did, or was, when he was poor and unknown. To-day he wears the livery of his achievement, but the achievement itself occurred when his story was the "short and simple annals of the Poor." What men call heroism is only its applause, or crown, or shadow: the reality is silent, thorn-crowned, and grim.



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## Heroes and Heroism

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Individuals find that out. At least, all truly heroic men do, and while they are embarrassed by the glare and glitter of the thing, they linger lovingly over their youth, with its hardship and poverty. They have found out that common life, and not cloth of gold, is the true field of heroism.

In the forest, we tell the age of trees by counting the rings of their growth. It is scarce too much to say that we can tell, if not the age in years, the age in wisdom of a man, by counting the circles of his ambition. The earliest ambition of man is to get.

The instinct of property begins with the dog and his bone, and the squirrel and his Winter store. In the savage it is still only an instinct. But when it becomes an ambition, the wilderness ceases, and fields come. When men begin to accumulate property, civilization has lighted her torch.

I know it has been constantly necessary to warn men against putting their trust in riches. But the teacher knows that the cornerstone of progress, and all culture, and all



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## Heroism in Common Life

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faith, is the ambition for possessions. The farm is first, afterward the village and the city. Wealth is first, afterward the library, the picture, the oratorio, and the cathedral. Wealth is the body of which civilization is the soul. And the body is first. In this world there are no disembodied spirits.

The ambition to get, then, is primary, fundamental, and marks man's first stage away from savagery. Mammonism, with all its sins, is a sign of progress. It is only the basement stage, but it is a stage of the development of man.

The next ring of human ambition is praise. The love of prosperity is followed by the love of publicity. After possessions comes praise, in the ascending scale of human desire.

Watch a man who is spending his life in the acquiring of a fortune. No day is too long; no task is too hard; no self-denial is too bitter. He will pinch, and toil, and starve. If you ask him, by the way, what he is going to do, when he has built up his fortune, with-



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## Heroes and Heroism

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out doubt, he will tell you that he is going to rest. It is all for a rainy day.

He is putting a breakwater between himself and the sea of necessity.

He is always saying, "What a good rest I am going to have. I will not need to work and I will not need to worry." But when he has gained his fortune, he works harder than ever. His worries are multiplied by a hundred. He buys yachts; he builds country villas; he has a retinue of servants and a string of horses. His troubles begin.

Why does he do it? He is a man of simple tastes. He cannot eat any more to-day than he did yesterday. He does not require any more beds to-night than he did last night. He does not enjoy his marble palace at Newport so much as he enjoyed the little cottage up in the country.

Why does he do it?

I will tell you why. It is because he has outgrown the old ambition for gain, and instead has been caught by the ambition for notoriety. He wants to be noticed. He wants his



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## Heroism in Common Life

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name to appear with the "Four Hundred." He is hungry for publicity, and sweeter also than the honey and the honey-comb is the praise of men.

A little while ago I was at a dinner, given by a most exclusive society of Manhattan. I think it was the most distinguished lot of men I have ever seen in a single gathering. The patriotism, the wealth and not a little of the culture of New York was there. Just after we sat down to the feast, the photograph fiend appeared, and by one of those marvels of science, by which men seem to be becoming like God, with whom a thousand years is like a day, before the dinner was through, they had the picture before us, all mounted and complete. It was about as big as a square yard of canvas. The desire to see that picture became so great that those grave men left their seats, like school boys, and gathered around the man who had the picture, and so blocked up the passage that the waiters had to stop serving. Every one was saying, "Am I in it?" Every man there



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## Heroes and Heroism

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was willing to pay ten dollars for the picture—he would have been willing to pay one hundred dollars for the picture, if he was in it. We smile at that and call it vanity; but we would do the same thing ourselves.

Once in a while, you find somebody who takes great pains to let you know that he does not care for praise and approval. The kindest thing you can think about him is that he is a member of the Ananias Club. If he is not that, he is a knave. A man is almost out of sight of the kingdom of God, if he gets so low down that he does not care what his fellow men say about him.

Man cannot live without approval.

The ambition to be well thought of is a higher ambition than to be well housed, or well fed, and has been one of the strongest motives, by which the great God has led this human race of ours up its rocky path from the cave of the brute to the gates of pearl. But human life has still another circle of value.

The man who can climb up out of the



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## Heroism in Common Life

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world of possession into the world of praise, will outgrow that satisfaction also. The praise of men will seem cheap, and he will hunger for the approval of his own conscience. "I do not want to have the name of being, I want to be" he secretly sighs, and instead of reputation demands character.

The wealth of the world is a prize to be sure, but it is a mere bauble, as compared with the wealth of the heart. The praise of men is sweet, to be sure, but it is as froth, when compared to the praise of conscience.

Men are deceived by glitter, and oftentimes reputation is only a bubble. The man, as he appears to himself, is far different from the man who appears to the crowd. And when the man can stand in the court of his own conscience, and never hear a word of censure, but only the voice of applause, he has reached the acme of human and divine greatness. For God can have no praise greater than the praise of his own nature.

Slowly, step by step, the individual, as he climbs the mount of wisdom, enlarges the cir-



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cle of his ambition. At last he reaches that altitude where the soul comes to its mastery, and it says to the man, "All this heartburning struggle of yours concerns the lower things. My Kingdom is higher. You have been asking for possessions and fame. Instead you have been given power and serenity. My children are not ranked by how much they possess, nor even by what other men think of them, nor even altogether by what they do, but the purple of my nobility is woven out of what they are.

And so men are always asking for place, and God instead is always putting them in the way of power. They ask for money—He offers manhood. They burn for notoriety—He gives them nobleness. They strive for a career—and lo! He clothes them with character. The greatness of a man therefore, lies not in the coat he wears, but the character he bears.

In his experience the individual but repeats the experience of the race. We are beginning to see that Jesus was not a sentimental-



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ist, but instead, wise beyond His time, and our time even, when He said, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." What men mistook for a flash of rhetoric is a lamp of truth.

The aristocracy of the world has had many dynasties.

There is the aristocracy of blood. Men trace their family line back twenty-five hundred years. The Mikado does. We belong to a half score of societies, and pin on our breast a medal for each one, all blazing with purple, and gold, and scarlet.

There is great potency in heredity, but it is not omnipotent. Blood will tell, but it does not tell all. Really, whether a man should pride himself on his family line or not, depends on the kind of folk his ancestors were. There are a good many of us who ought to count it not the least of our mercies, that we cannot go back much further than our great-grandfathers.

This aristocracy of blood has generally thrown itself in the way of progress and



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## Heroes and Heroism

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righteousness. It was the Bourbons who held back the progress of France, until there was an explosion. It was the Stuarts who well nigh snuffed out English liberty. It is the bureaucracy that has brought Russia to her last sad estate. The greatest foe of the Son of Man, when He was upon the earth, was the aristocracy of blood. The priests and the Pharisees were insolent in their pride of descent and felt that the hope of the world rose and set within themselves. Flinging their crimes in their faces, He cried out to them, "The Kingdom of God shall be taken away from you and shall be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." Aristocracy based on family is not the aristocracy that endures.

Another order of nobility, which men have built up in every age, is that founded on their possessions.

We in America know a great deal about that nobility. Their doings in Newport, or in Fifth Avenue, are chronicled in all the papers. They do not like to inquire too closely into



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their pedigrees. The proudest of them, and the most powerful, would only have to go back two or three generations to find that their fathers were fur peddlers, or railroad track builders, or cattle herders, or miners. Because of their wealth they now occupy the seats of the mighty.

A full pocket-book covers a multitude of sins.

Of old it was said, "How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the Kingdom of God. It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God." The nobility of riches is not the aristocracy which endures.

Another aristocracy, which man has founded, is the aristocracy of achievement.

When Napoleon, the Emperor of France, married Louise of Austria, and for the first time was present at a family gathering of the House of Austria, the old Emperor presented his son-in-law with a parchment, encased in a golden casket. On this parchment



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was traced out Napoleon's family tree, and the old man said, "Your Majesty is descended from a family of kings." Napoleon tore it in two, and stamped it on the floor, with the reply, "I am the founder of my own family."

Napoleon may have been an upstart in the eyes of royal Europe, but there is something genuine about a man who refuses to buy a pedigree, and snaps his fingers in the face of a senile royalty of blood, and can point to his own achievements as his patent to nobility. Napoleon, and maybe it was the greatest thing he ever did, overthrew the aristocracy of lineage, and set up the aristocracy of those who had done things. So he threw away the old orders of nobility, and founded a new order of nobility, which survives until to-day, and is called the "Legion of Honor." He pinned its decoration on no man for his descent, or because he was rich; but only those were admitted to this charmed circle who had achieved some great thing in arms, in statesmanship, in scholarship, or inven-



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tion. The aristocracy of achievement is greater than the aristocracy of blood and wealth. It is more democratic. It more truly arrives at royalty. Great is the aristocracy of those who do something; but it is not the aristocracy that endures.

The modern world has a new order of nobility. It is made up, not of the people who have grandfathers; nor the people who have large possessions; nor yet the people who have done things; but it is made up of people who are real. It is the nobility of character, and it shall yet rule the world. ✓

Such was the dream and prophecy of Jesus. We live nineteen hundred years after He spoke; do we see any sign of its coming true? There is but one reply.

Law has taken the place of the king's whim. Absolutism has given place to constitutions. Monarchies are yielding to democracies.

Even, to-day, not the king, with his royal descent; not the rich man with his millions; not the conqueror with his legions; but the plain people with their homes, their children,



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and their schools, their hopes, and fears, rule the world.

I know sometimes it does not seem so. You go to England and you will find in St. Paul's a monument to the Duke of Wellington. He was the man who overcame the French. You go to Trafalgar Square and you see a monument to Nelson. He was the man who made England mistress of the ocean. You will find a monument to Lord Cornwallis, and on it is written, "He routed the Americans with great slaughter." You will find no great monument to Shakespeare, who is the glory of England; and no great monument to John Bright, the man of peace; and you will be tempted to think that men still honor most those who slaughter other men.

But England has thrown away the sword, for she has found out that "they who take the sword, shall perish by the sword." No more can any king say, "I am the State." No more can any Cassius say, "Cæsar doth bestride the world." No more can any George say, "Every man has his price." The United



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States has come. It is the land of peace, and it is mightier than England. Japan has come, and it is the nation of peace; and lo! it is mightier than Russia. War is almost dead. Neither the king nor the soldier rules the world. President Roosevelt is the most powerful ruler in the world to-day. But there is a stronger ruler than President Roosevelt, and that is the People. He rules only by the People's will. We have seen the soldier's farewell.

But, you say, what about the aristocracy of wealth? Do not the rich men of the earth control it? Looking at the sickening revelations of immorality and dishonesty in high places, men say, "Mammon is God."

Yes, but read all that is written on the page of to-day's revelations, and you will find something besides. You will find out that the people, in the name of righteousness, have cleaned out the gang in Missouri; that a few men, in the name of righteousness, have written a new Declaration of Independence in Philadelphia. You will find out



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that to-day even the politicians have turned over a new leaf and are writing platforms denouncing the bosses, and proclaiming themselves honest. You may say, if you want to, something about "wolves in sheep's clothing," and "the leopard cannot change his spots." But it is eloquent, none the less, in its testimony to the reign of righteousness. For I tell you, piety is in power when the devil turns monk.

Time was when we would pardon Burns's drunkenness, because he could sing a song. We will not do it now.

Time was when we would pardon a Stuart's dishonesty, because he was a king; but we will not do it now. Time was when we would forgive a man his licentiousness, because he was an aristocrat; but we will not do it now. Time was when we would gloss over a man's lies and make him a senator, because he was rich; but we will not do it now. Righteousness is the demand of the hour. We will follow no hero who is untrue, no matter what his wealth; and we will honor the righteous



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man, although we find him poor. What a wonderful change is going on in values in human society.

Who cannot see what the end will be when it is fully come?

Not a few, who are in high places, will be found among the lowly; and many who are among the plain will find themselves in the seats of the mighty. Then a man's wealth will not hide from men the poverty of his heart, but will be his shame. Then Lazarus's rags will not conceal from men the loyalty of his soul, and he will be in Abraham's bosom. Rich men, who are simply rich and nothing more, will take their places below a little child, and mothers, who have given their lives for us, and the martyr who stood for the truth. Every unjust thing, and everything that maketh or speaketh a lie, will be cast into utter darkness, and truth shall reign everywhere.

In the light of its coming this aristocracy is absolute democracy. Cæsar's nobility—it is only for the highly born. Napoleon's no-



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bility—it is made up of a small number. Most of us will write no great poem, make no great discovery, or fight no great battle. The nobility of Cræsus—only millionaires are admitted, and most men are poor from the cradle to the grave.

✓ The aristocracy of blood—we can never enter in. The aristocracy of gold—we cannot qualify. The aristocracy of achievement—we are not able. But the aristocracy of goodness, the new nobility of character, where is there one who may not compete? The rich man and the poor may both enter in. The lord and the peasant may go in side by side. The popular idol and the pauper have an equal chance. No man is so high that he can ignore it, and no man is so low that he cannot enter in.

Pride on the one hand has nothing to boast, nor has humility on the other anything to fear. Does the king's high vocation make him meek and lowly of heart?—only then is he anybody. Does the peasant's humble task teach him love, and honesty, and faith?—if



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so he is knighted at the plow. The reign of character is the golden age of which men have dreamed.

This has a good deal to do with our estimate of great men. Maybe, after all, there is no field for heroism like our ordinary common life.

Am I not voicing a common experience when I say there was a time when I thought that a man, in order to succeed, had to be rich? I looked upon millionaires as the great men of the world, and I pitied men who had to live in a cottage.

I think that the first time that I ever doubted the infallibility of my own father was when I saw that, while other men made great fortunes, he remained a plain husbandman. I began to think that other men were greater than he.

Like many another young man, I began by believing that reputation was greatness. I looked upon the man who went to Congress, or was Governor, or maybe President, as having attained the very height of human



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greatness. I rather pitied the great rank of common folk, and my dream was for applause and public office. The years went on, and, though I strove with might and main, I did not become rich, and I have never filled any public office.

At first there was a feeling of disappointment. But at last I began to see with other eyes. I saw in the books that the great man of Athens was not Alcibiades, the millionaire, but Socrates, who wore "a thread-bare coat." And in my own experience, as I look back at it now and know better, I see that my own father, with his incorruptible integrity, with his hatred of every sham and lie, and with his plain clothes, was a greater man than many I have seen riding in their carriages. I also know that if the man, who is rich, really amounts to anything, it was not primarily because of his wealth of purse, but because of his wealth of heart. I look around and see that in the books of history, the Presidents of the United States, save two or three, have not really been the men who have



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ruled the nation. They have sat in the chair of Washington, but they have done the bidding of the people. The men who have led the people, and therefore mastered the masters, were teachers like Horace Mann, and ministers like Henry Ward Beecher, and business men, and mechanics, and mothers, plain-living and plain-going folks all.

I look around in my own acquaintance, and I see that the great men are not the men whose names figure most in the paper, but are the silent men, and oftentimes the suffering men and women. Yes, the greatest soul I have ever seen was an invalid whose name you have never heard. And I see now that the public men who amount to anything, have their influence, not because of their position, but because of the power which they have brought to their position.

Poverty, Obscurity, Sorrow, Adversity, Toil, are the names of some of God's great universities. Out from them He has sent His greatest hearts. Men have been asking for place and position, and for reply God has given



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them, in mysterious ways that He alone knows, personal wealth and power.

History is full of instruction here.

On Good Friday morning Pilate was a king on a golden throne, and Jesus was a prisoner whom all the world despised. How has it been since? Why do we remember Pontius Pilate, and how happens it that we know he ever lived? All because he was the tool of hate against his wonderful prisoner. Like some fossil his name is embalmed in the rock of Christ's fame, to tell men of a time when the morality of the world had but emerged from chaos.

Think how it was when Paul spent his last days in Rome. The Emperor was Nero, whom we remember for his crimes. But in that day, he was celebrated for his skill in music and poesy. He was the patron of fine arts. He was so popular that even in his own life he got himself worshipped as a god. Another great man whose name was upon everybody's lips had been dead only a single generation. His name was Cicero, the great orator, and



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in every library, and in the hands of every scholar, were his books on Old Age, Friendship, and Consolation. Next to Nero, Cicero was regarded by that age as the greatest Roman. As for the little hooked-nose Jew, who had been arrested in one of the provinces and brought to Rome in chains, very little was known about him, and nothing was cared about him. Festus and Agrippa, provincial governors, had written something about him and his strange doctrine, and about his skill in dialectic. In the Jewish quarter he was equally revered and hated. Down in the Ghetto he held lectures, and some of the servants of Cæsar's household spoke highly of the man. But the Jews were becoming turbulent again, and it was reported that this Paul was dangerous politically. He was talking anarchy. He was easily put out of the way. His condemnation did not attract attention, or raise a mob. One morning early, a squad of soldiers took him outside the city gates. In a flash his head was off, and his body was thrown to rot upon the refuse of the city.



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That very day Nero had a triumphal procession, and the empire rang from the mountains to the sea with "Long live Cæsar."

But times have changed. Strange to relate, that old Roman civilization has passed away, and all that has been spared of it has been preserved by the disciples of that man who was confined in the Mamertine prison. We do not remember Nero at all but for his crimes, and his cruelty towards Paul and his fellow Christians. He is remembered to be despised, while his very throne has become the Pontiff's Chair of the despised Christian sect.

We are familiar with this change of judgments in our own history. Go back fifty years and read the old files of magazines and papers. We find upon the tongues of the people many names which are strange to our ears. Political leaders, whose political fortunes our fathers followed with much enthusiasm, scarce got their names put down in history at all.

What does the schoolboy know about Marcy,



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or Wise, or Cass, or Bell, or Breckenridge, or Seymour? Even Stephen A. Douglas is remembered only because of his great opponent. These men in the days of our fathers held the centre of the stage. They were going to be presidents, and to them men expected their children to build monuments. Take even the far greater men, whose places in posterity seemed certain, Calhoun, Clay, Webster. Their glory is but the glory of a departing greatness. Daniel Webster was the greatest orator America has ever produced. He was the master builder of this nation. He ruled New England like a god. And yet Daniel Webster's place in history has been a lessening place. While he lived men called him a giant, but their children have found out that he was only five feet nine and a half inches tall.

In those days there came to the front another statesman. He had no family tree. He was only a poor mountain white. He was a backwoods lawyer. He had never been heard of in the East until he matched swords with the



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little giant of Democracy. When men voted for him for President, they voted for a hope; and when they saw him, they saw "no beauty in him that we should desire him." He came to his inauguration like a thief in the night. His enemies set him down for a demagogue, and his friends called him an accident. No man ever knew Abraham Lincoln while he lived. But now that he is dead, and the passions that obscured him scattered, he looms up by the side of Washington, and, all the world bearing witness, he is pronounced the greatest man of his century.

Time does not suffice for further illustration. It is the veriest commonplace that the verdict of history reverses the judgments of contemporaries; and the world rarely recognizes its great men while they are alive.

What is the principle of Time's selection? What is the test of greatness? What is the secret of renown? Why is it that possessing that one quality, no poverty can obscure, no obscurity can hide, and even wealth itself is forgotten? And why is it that without that



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secret, no wealth, no kingship, no fame, can keep any man's memory alive? Men may guess: men may experiment: but as usual Jesus knows and declares.

Hear Him:—"To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth."

The universe is a moral universe. It is rock-ribbed with morality. As granite is the spine of the mountains, righteousness is the backbone of the world. Every man who comes into the world was born for truth and righteousness. No matter how rich he is, no matter how royal, no matter how powerful, how popular, or how beloved, if a man is false or untrue, you cannot keep his memory alive.

This test comes to fathers and mothers and the plain people. At last I have gained your ear. Indifferent you may be to my moralizing, forgetful you may be of the ethics of Jesus Christ in society and in business, but when I speak of that which concerns childhood, you are all ears. Do you know that the peril for the home in our time is this—that



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we parents forget that deeper than all else, and indeed that everything is as hay and stubble beside this gold—is this fact that fathers and mothers are brought into the world to bear witness to their children to the reality of righteousness? I do not care how big your house is: I do not care how much you spend a year to live: I do not care what fortunes you settle upon your children: if you have not revealed to them, as the rib and backbone of God's universe, those eternal verities, called righteousness, and truth, and love, you have been a curse to your children, and not a benefit. You have damned them and not trained them. Better if they had never been born, and better for you to have had a millstone round your neck and been cast into the depths of the sea. These were Christ's own words, when He talked about those who caused the little ones to stumble.

Moreover, a parent never teaches his child righteousness by words.

You may teach them the Commandments until they know them by heart; you may mora-



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lize as much as Lord Chesterfield did to his son: but if you yourself worship Mammon instead of God; if you steal and call it business; if you lie, then your child, no matter what creed he may profess, or what church he attends, will be a liar and a thief, and an infidel also. Righteousness is an atmosphere; it is color; it is tone; it is *tang*; it is spirit; it is life.

That is why women have more influence over their children than men. It is because they are better.

Who has had the greatest influence over your life? You may be a rich man, and you may tell me of an old merchant of fine character who took an interest in you, and gave you a chance, and taught you the noblest ethics of trade. You are proud of your benefactor. But he did not have the greatest influence over your life.

You may tell me of the great tides of opportunity or adversity that came to you. Suddenly you found yourself in a large place, and all you had to do was to spread your



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## Heroes and Heroism

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wings and fly; or suddenly, you found yourself between the millstones of adversity, and men said you would be ground to powder. And from that experience you date your new birth into achievement. But these conditions of your life are not the great influences of your life.

You may tell me about some great soul poet or orator, Phillips Brooks, or Henry Ward Beecher, how you came within the spell of their personality, and how they awoke the angel within you, and from that day until now you have been a better man. But they are not the supreme influence.

Whose was the hand in your maturity that modified your judgment, and opened the gateways of your generosity, and took from your shoulders the burden of passing years, and brought you back once more into the golden morning of youth? It was the hand of your baby girl.

Whose was the influence in your young manhood, that shone before you as a pillar of fire by night, and a pillar of cloud by day, and



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## Heroism in Common Life

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made all gross things, and all temptations, and all the baser thoughts, fall away impotent, and without any power or charm? Whose was the influence that had power to lay its hand upon you, full of the spirit of adventure and wild liberty, and make you lay down your freedom, and take upon yourself limitations and responsibilities, and with a song bind your life to the will of others? Whose was the influence that took all the elements of your character, which seemed as yet to be in solution, and crystallized them into a purpose, and a poise, and a stability, that nothing has been able to bend, or break? When you come to answer, you whisper the name of a woman your children call "Mother."

Back of all that, there is another influence in your life, which you have no words to describe. It came into it before you were born, and lingers over it like a golden cloud, now that you are old; sweeter than music, gentler than the caress of the south wind; wiser than a teacher, and stronger than a prophet; more



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## Heroes and Heroism

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constant and nearer than your father's influence upon you—what is it? The years may have been many and the years may have been long, since she went away. She may have been a school girl and you her first-born; she may have been a rustic and you may be a scholar; she may have lived in a cottage, and you may mingle with those who dwell in kings' houses; but beyond all other influences, before them all, diviner than them all, and stronger than any other influence in your life, excepting the hand of God, is the influence of that other woman, who has loved you better than all. You must say, and every man of us must say, what Abraham Lincoln said, when fame had come to him, "All that I am, and all that I hope to be, I owe to my angel mother."

And how did she do it? What is the secret of her omnipotence? You know the answer. It was because of her goodness. In her love for her child, in her laying down her life for her child, there was no dross; no neglect; there was no short-coming; there was no sham, nor fleck, nor spot. Her goodness is absolute.



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## Heroism in Common Life

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Through hardship, through good fortune, through sorrow, through joy, as the fire sets the color in the potter's vessel, her goodness and her moral greatness were only intensified. And if you want to find an epitaph for your mother's grave, here it is, "To this end was she born and for this cause came she into the world, that she might bear witness to the truth."

"Life," says Browning, "is our chance of learning love." Yes, life, our plain, common life, is the chance of learning love, and faith, and patience, and sacrifice, and fidelity. Better is our common life for heroism than cloth of gold. Heroes and heroines there are all about us in plain men and women, called father, mother, neighbor, friend, who have lived, not for the things which are seen, for they are temporal; but who have lived for the things which are not seen, for they are eternal.

That instinct which makes all races in their childhood trace their ancestry back to the gods, as did the Greeks and Latins, is a true



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## Heroes and Heroism

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instinct. Myth is generally truer than history. We are the sons and daughters of heroes.

I do not thank anybody for telling me that Tom Pinch, and Peggotty, and Little Dorrit, and Oliver Twist, and Sydney Carton are only fancied people of Charles Dickens's brain, nor do I believe them. I take them for portraits of real people, every one. If Charles Dickens never knew them, I have. They are the portraits of flesh and blood people whom I have loved. It is because they are old friends that I am moved to tears, when I hear their story told. At the time, we did not recognize their heroism, and I am sure they never themselves suspected it. But now that our eyes are opened, we feel all reverential, like the beloved disciple, who in after years recalled his intimacy with the Master and said, "I listened to the heart-beat of God."

That was the revelation a Scotch minister made the other year of his first parish, which came upon the literary world like a miracle, and dissolved all the world into tears. Drum-



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## Heroism in Common Life

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tochty was our native village. We all recognized Margaret Howe and Dr. McClure. They belonged to our childhood. Whether we all did it or not, we felt like writing, as other men and women did from the New World and Old, and asking Ian Maclaren how he came to know the life story of our mother and our family doctor.

We belong to a heroic race: we live amid great and noble men and women; and heroism like heaven, lay all about our infancy.

Horace Bushnell spoke what we know, when he said, "You must not go into the burial places, and look about only for the tall monuments and the titled names. It is not the starred epitaphs of the Doctors of Divinity, and Generals, and Judges, the Honorables, the Governors, nor even the village notables called Esquires, that mark the springs of our successes and the sources of our distinction. These are rather effects than causes; the spinning wheels have done a good deal more than these. Around the honored few, here a Bellamy or a Day, sleeping in the midst



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of his flock, here a Wolcott or a Smith, an Allen or a Tracy, a Reeve or a Gould, all names of honor—round about these few and others like them, are lying multitudes of worthy men and women, under their humbler monuments or in graves that are hidden by the monumental green that loves to freshen over their forgotten resting-place; and in these, the humble but good many, we are to find the deepest, truest causes of our happy history. Here lie the sturdy kings of Homespun, who climbed among these hills with their axes, to cut away room for their cabins and for family prayers, and sow for the good future to come. Here lie their sons, who foddered their cattle on the snows, and built stone fence while the corn was sprouting in the hills, getting ready, in that way, to send a boy or two to college. Here lie the good housewives who made coats every year, like Hannah, for their children's bodies, and lined their memory with catechism. Here the millers who took honest toil of the rye; the smiths and coopers who superintended two hands and got a little rev-



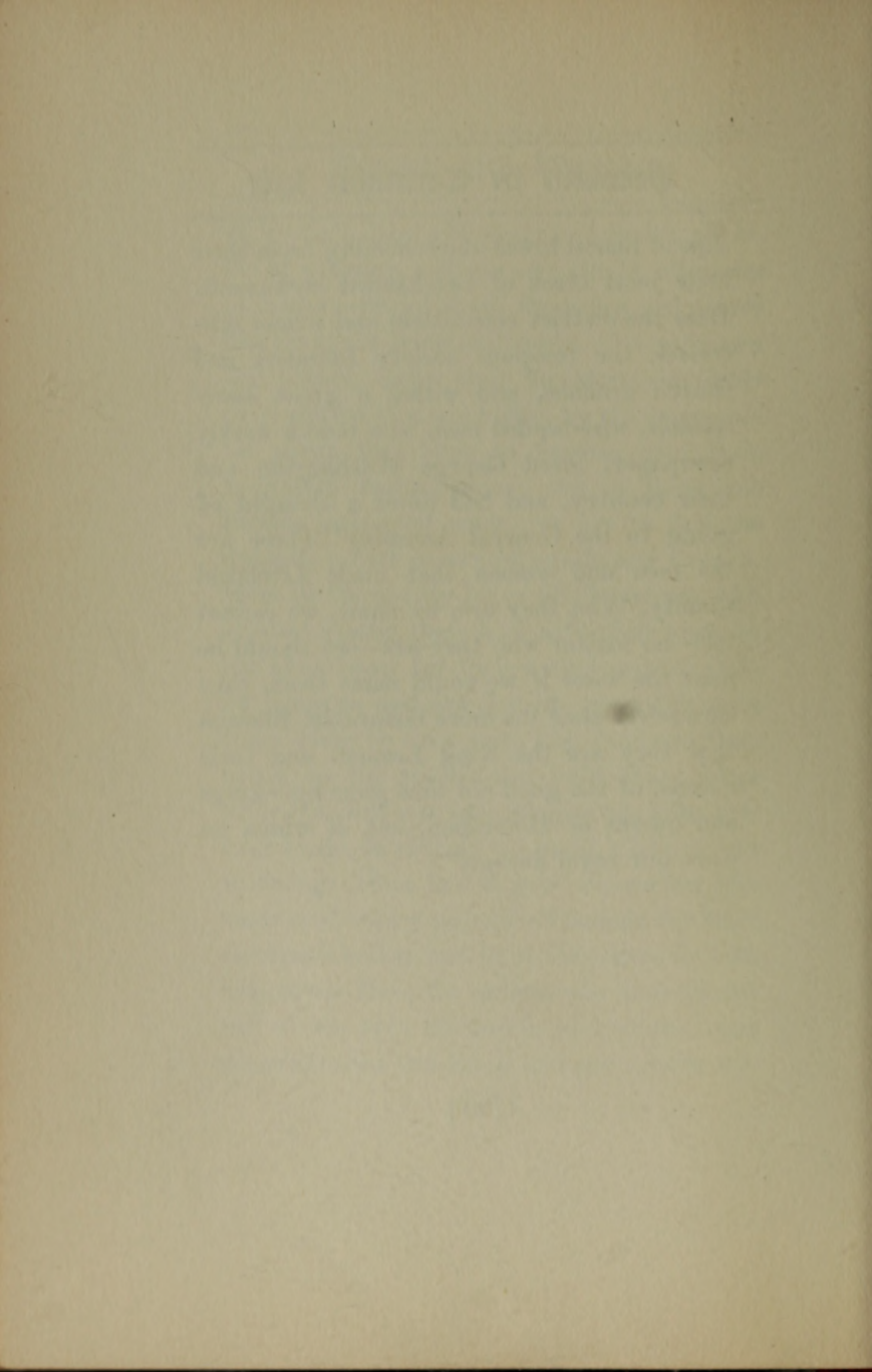
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## Heroism in Common Life

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enue of honest bread and schooling from their little joint stock of two-handed investment. Here the district committees and school mistresses, the religious society founders and church deacons, and withal a great many sensible, wise-headed men, who read a weekly newspaper, loved George Washington and their country, and had never a thought of going to the General Assembly! These are the men and women that made Litchfield County. Who they are, by name, we cannot tell—no matter who they are—we should be none the wiser if we could name them, they themselves none the more honorable. Enough that they are the King Lemuels and their queens, of the good old time gone by—kings and queens of Homespun, out of whom we draw our royal lineage.”







# **The Abandoned Farm**

## **PART I**



*"For backward, Duddon! as I cast my eyes,  
I see what was, and is, and will abide;  
Still glides the Stream, and shall not cease to glide;  
The Form remains, the Function never dies;  
While we, the brave, the mighty, and the wise,  
We Men, who in our morn of youth defied  
The elements, must vanish;—be it so!  
Enough, if something from our hands have power  
To live, and act, and serve the future hour;  
And if, as tow'rd the silent tomb we go,  
Through love, through hope, and faith's transcendent  
dower,  
We feel that we are greater than we know."*

—WORDSWORTH.



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# The Abandoned Farm

## PART I

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WE came to the farm after many miles; and we came on purpose. We tarried in sight of it for four and twenty hours, at the inn, in the valley, that we might climb that long winding road, and come out upon that sacred hill on a Sabbath afternoon.

Autumn was chosen by us, and without spoken reason. It was our intuition. It is the best time to go to the country. It is the time of crisp nights, hazy days, and Turner landscapes. The birds are going, the cricket is beginning his death song, the tree has put on its coat of many colors. The sickle flashing among the golden corn, the frost on the vine, the red-cheeked apple, the golden pumpkin in the field, and the scarlet berry on the fence row, all proclaim the maturity of the year.



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## Heroes and Heroism

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Besides, we younger ones of the party were going with the Deacon and Mrs. Deacon. It was their farm, or had been in the long ago. That was when the Deacon and Mrs. Deacon were young. He was twenty, she was sixteen. He had driven her home from boarding school twenty miles away. The farm folks had liked him from the first, although he was city bred. The farm teemed then with life and fruitfulness. The old house was the scene of large hospitality and many an evening of mirth. From its wide porch the eye swept the valley for thirty miles. From the sugar bush, on the hill, one looked the other way upon a sunset that flamed, long after the valleys were filled with man-made lights. The strawberry apple recalled old faces and simple joys, and we were soon talking of picnics, parties, and wedding bells. But all that is the language of Springtime. But now it is Autumn — Autumn in the year, Autumn on the farm, and early Autumn with the Deacon and Mrs. Deacon.

One cannot be very sure of the signs of early



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## The Abandoned Farm

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Autumn. Most of the time it is still so warm and full of life that one is tempted to think that in thinking of Autumn, he was mistaken. But still there is the trace—the simple scarlet leaf, and one night touched with a speck of frost. It was so with the Deacon and Mrs. Deacon. The trace, mysterious, melancholy, was in Mrs. Deacon's eye. The frost was on the Deacon's temple. The single, scarlet leaf—that was a scar which told of a battle. And the fruits of a cultured and disciplined life abounded everywhere. And this certain sign of Autumn was on these twain—they remembered more than they dreamed. Forty years before, when they walked under the maple trees, they built "castles in Spain." Their castle was a romance. To-day their castles are in the past. And memory, like the maples on the hills, weaves its garlands of scarlet and gold.

They led us to the spring and had us taste the water. Try as hard as we might, it did not taste as sweet as they said it was. It would have seemed like nectar to us, if we



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## Heroes and Heroism

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could have drunk from their goblet of long ago. A willow stood there, weeping for departed days.

We stood with them, uncovered, at the graves on the hill. I felt I had a right there, for I had known in the city the woman whose home this had been. Hers was a green old age, and strong she was, as her native trees, to the end. But when it came to entering the old house, shrunken and decrepit, and going into the old rooms, with their holy memories, we stayed on the outside. It was too sacred for a stranger. The ghosts would have barred his impious way. What they said to Mrs. Deacon I could not hear, though I heard them talking. And the way she softly cried, when she came out, I knew they had sung to her the old songs.

I lingered behind the Deacon and Mrs. Deacon, and watched them with reverence, as they led the way to the "Rock Pasture." At "Table Rock" I saw them sit, once more, where they had sat at the first woodland picnic, when the old farm friends had received



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## The Abandoned Farm

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the young stranger into the family, some for his own sake, but more because he had already been received into Annie's heart. From the movement of their lips, I could tell they recalled the names of all who had been in the company. Nay, maybe they saw them all once again. The stranger's eyes were holden, and he could not see the absent and the dead. When they came back to us, love flamed in their eyes, and their tones were gentle.

It was really a Sabbath for us all, sweet, sacred, supernatural. The only soul in the place was the stranger's hired man, and, when he found out that we had come two hundred and fifty miles to see an old house, and barn, and a decaying farm, he plainly counted us weak in the upper story. He set down Mrs. Deacon's silence to lonesomeness, or fear of the gathering shadows in the country. He never dreamed of the company all about her, nor the sweet converse her heart held. It made one remember the saying about an incident in the life of the Great Pilgrim: "The multitudes said it thundered:



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## Heroes and Heroism

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but others said, 'An angel hath spoken to Him.' "

When that sentence recurred to me, on that Sunday afternoon, among the country things, I loved so well, memory went out to finish the quotation. "And Jesus said, 'This voice hath not come for my sake, but for your sakes.'" Memory rings not her silver bells for a funeral, but for a school. Even when she tells of the sunset, her face is toward the sunrise. Her sayings, like the Scriptures, are 'profitable for instruction.'

1. The old farm is a picture of our human nature. A field is a footprint of civilization. It may be surrounded by forests and mountain wilds. Civilization always is surrounded by savagery. But a field, howsoever stony and unkempt, always seems nobler than a forest. It is, in some more or less full way, what the forest was meant for, and is waiting to be. Any piece of ground, however neglected, that once gave to the world a shock of corn and was once the home of human



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## The Abandoned Farm

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beings, is worth more to our thought than the ground where only wild things and wild men dwell. The ruins of Tyre are greater than the forests of Africa. The wild land is the haunt of the beast, but a field is where a soul has dwelt apart. It is sacred ground.

The field has its weakness within and its foes without. Outside are the woods and the beasts. They always threaten it. Leave the fence down, or let it grow weak at its sentinel's post, and lo! they rush in and devour it, and seek to trample it back to savagery. Enemies of the harvest lurk within it. Briars are hidden in the fence corner. Brambles are waiting their chance by stump and stonepile. Weeds, unseen by day, will spring up over night, and choke the grass and the grain. The ground, that is dedicated to high purposes, has its lower nature lurking within it. Eternal vigilance is the price of its culture. Neglect it, and you have another fall in Eden. When it becomes old, the weeds, so long destroyed, and which have not appeared for generations, seem to literally be-



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## Heroes and Heroism

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set it, as though they guessed its waning strength and slower ways. Who can tame a field? It is no wonder farmers grow discouraged, and at last abandon the farm.

Who can tame a man? "Sin ever croucheth at the door." But from within is the gravest danger. Old appetites and base passions, so long put down and made war upon, will lie ready to spring up, like seeds that slumber in the ground, waiting their day for a hundred years. It is when men and fields grow old, and are less vigilant to watch, and less strong to fight, that they are overwhelmed. Soil and soul seem to be in league with their enemies.

Both soil and soul have other alliances, which are stronger than the things that beset them. Slowly and surely is the earth coming to a garden. Slowly and surely is man becoming divine.

The soil hath an ally in the sun. It hath a helper in the rain. It was made for a garden. Harvests lie all locked up in its breast. The forest, the bramble and weed, are but para-



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## The Abandoned Farm

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sites, and interlopers, and could find no standing room save it was unoccupied. It is given over to these things only because it has not been given to its true mission. The sunrise, every morning, calls the ground to its high destiny, and at night, the sunset lingers to promise a harvest to-morrow. Likewise the soul, however tamed and unfruitful, was made for flowers and fruits. Within it are seeds and forces, awaiting a resurrection, at the touch of a friendly hand.

Once men saw value in the landscape only for its game. That was the day of the Indian. Nobody counted the soil of worth or sought to possess it. That was the way of barbarism.

Once men saw in the earth only the value of its timber or gold. That was the time of the spoiler and the robber, and nobody sought ownership of the land for a permanent possession. That was the way of commerce.

Once men saw value in only a bit here and there of the earth by some river. That was the day of the pioneer. The rest of the land



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was given over to the wild communion of the mountains. That was the way of the old-time teacher and preacher, with their doctrines, that only the bright child might have a chance to be a scholar, and only the elect were to be saved.

But we have come upon a wiser time. There is now no waste land. Our richest men are buying up the great idle tracts. Land mania is so strong upon us that we can hardly guard Nature's wonders and our forest preserves. We have at last found out that all the land is good; that there is a fortune in every mountain stream; a home in every up-land glen; and a harvest, rich and splendid, in every unplowed acre.

So it is with our new understanding of human nature. That is the fever and passion of democracy, which topples thrones, and transforms palaces into Parliament houses. It is the dawn of the intrinsic ability and nobility of man. That is why our pulpits no more speak of "how few there are that be saved," or about the elect and the lost. It is not be-



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## The Abandoned Farm

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cause the preacher is a coward, or the people have itching ears for soft doctrine. It is because both people and preacher, whether the theologians have found it out or not, have a new vision of the ability and the nobility of man. Suddenly we have become as wise as Peter, "whom God hath cleansed that call we not common or unclean." Human nature, with all its faults, is divine nature in process.

Some day the bog will be drained. What fruits will it and the slums bring forth then! Some day the stony place will yield to cultivation. What flowers will bloom then in the waste places, only he can dream who has seen the arbutus blossom under the snow, and the wild rose in the cleft of the rock. For goodness lies banked in every soul, and there is a Christ in every man.

So, wherever I saw the rocks on the old farm, I found grass growing in their lea: and when I saw brambles, I knew the soil was rich beneath; and even the wild land, I knew, was waiting to be made into a garden. Like a



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## Heroes and Heroism

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psalm the old place was to me. It heartened me, and sent me forth with increased hope, and augmented faith in our human nature.

2. The old farm is also a picture of the struggle of our human nature.

The great battle field is a Mecca for a pilgrim host. Who would not cross the sea to see where Harold fell at Hastings, or Napoleon went down to defeat at Waterloo? On this side, I think, to stand on the Heights of Abraham, or at Ticonderoga, or on Round Top, makes one thoughtful, if not reverential. One takes off his hat and treads softly on a battle field. It is there we realize our heritage was brought with a price. Sacred is the spot where our fathers died.

But the farm is the first of battle fields; first in importance I mean, not first in time. Without hesitation, I would put the old hill farm, whether old England or New, Scottish, or Alpine, far and away in honor ahead of Thermopylæ, or Meter Hill. More blood has been spilt there. The cause has been nobler; and the heroism of the children of



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## The Abandoned Farm

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homespun over that of the sons of Mars is beyond compare.

It was on a New Hampshire hillside, one day, when Daniel Webster was helping his father build a fence, that his old father told him that he was to go to college. "We intend to wear our old clothes another year. We have put a second mortgage on the farm. Denied an education myself, I am determined that one of my children, anyhow, shall have a chance to be a scholar." That night the boy could not sleep. He sat up in his attic, he tells us, "over his new found joy till the candle burned itself out in the socket." How did his old father sleep in his chamber below? He was still wide awake when the first faint streak of morning light called him anew to his task. Old and failing man that he was, he turned his back on a green old age, and took upon his shoulders a young man's burden, and did it with a prayer in his heart and a song on his lips, and all that his boy might have a better chance in life than he had. It is no wonder that when Webster was the



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## Heroes and Heroism

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most famous man in America he said, "The finest gentleman, I have ever known, and the most heroic of soul, was my old father." The fields of our forefathers have seen more heroism than any field of cloth of gold.

Indeed, I question whether anywhere, or anyhow, man has ever appeared quite so masterful and like a god, as when the pioneer, single handed, heart within and axe without, has led his wife and children into the forest to found a home. Mountains frowned, rivers barred his advance, forests threatened to swallow him up in pathless solitude. Frost and fire camped on his trail. Wild beasts suddenly marked his path, and wilder men regarded him as an intruder. The twin wolves, disease and famine, by night and day, hung around his camp fire. Unhalting and undismayed, the man plunged into the wilderness. With his club, he scattered his enemies; and with his axe, he felled the forest. To the wild man he said, "Begone": to the wild beasts he said, "Serve me": to the trees he said, "Shelter me": and to the ground he



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## The Abandoned Farm

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said, "Feed me." Slowly and surely they obeyed their master. For the forest there was a farm: for a tree there was a house: for a wolf there was a dog: for a thicket there was a garden. Even the mountains unlocked for man her treasures of iron and gold, and the river carried his burden and ground his corn.

On no battle field, of which I know, has there been any achievement of man equal to that of the farm. And the struggle goes on from generation to generation. Nature's children are stubborn and wary foes. They fight while the man sleeps. They can wait. And woe to the farm, whose master goes off for a holiday, or grows old. He returns to an ambuscade; or when his eye grows dim, finds his own fields held by the enemy fortified. The agricultural soldier must enlist for life, and he must train his son to wield his battle axe.

But if the Roman soldier's progress in Gaul was traced by the villages found in ashes, our farmer's path is marked by the houses he has built, the harvests that ripen, and his



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footsteps are a smiling land of plenty. He grows rich by enriching: and he leaves the world better than he found it.

Shall we see these things in the fields, and not know that the same laws obtain in man's soul? Life is a battle for the possession and enrichment of the soul. A man has as much soil as he cultivates. He has as many virtues as he plants. He reaps what he sows. The wicked man is the poor man. The sinful man is the sluggard, who lets the weeds of appetite grow. Goodness is a prize, and it costs industry and thrift. It is as hard to build up character, as it is to hew a farm out of a wilderness, and it is as sure.

The Protestant world has overworked the truth of goodness as a grace, or at least, has misread it into a talismanic charm. We have almost thought that our goodness was all a gift, and that we were fortunate or unfortunate in receiving our share of the spoil flung us haphazard by the mysterious hand of Providence. We have said, "That man was born good." We have excused ourselves



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## The Abandoned Farm

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with the word, "I have an awful temper," or "I was born with the appetite." Who of us has worked at soul culture as at grape culture, or the growing of wheat? That is a true word of a true man, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." God is always there to help, to be sure, as He is at the farmer's right hand, but even God cannot help a thriftless husbandman. Paul might have been writing about farming in an agricultural paper:

"For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the world rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in heavenly places. Wherefore, take up the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and, having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; withal taking up the shield of faith, wherewith he shall be able to quench



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all the fiery darts of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: with all prayer and supplication."

"Fight," "stand," "truth," "righteousness," "faith," are the words the farmer uses to subdue the fields and gain his harvest. But Paul used them in a book, called the New Testament, and he was talking about the battle of man's life for the growth and enrichment of his soul.

The soul of man is the farm of God, and man is the husbandman.

Goodness is an achievement, and character is a golden harvest.

3. The old farm is a picture of the victory of our human life.

Right well do I know that phrase, "victory of life," will provoke a challenge in many minds. Especially does it sound like a paradox to us in the mood which the contemplation of a deserted farm brings.

The declining sun of an Autumn day. A whisper in the air of Winter, not far away.



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## The Abandoned Farm

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A man and a woman, also in the early Autumn. A decaying house and deserted; an untravelled road; an unused spring; overgrown fields. No voice of children; no song of harvesters. Only the word pathetic—"It used to be." And when we ask for the strong man and faithful woman, whose house this was, and whose long life of toil and sacrifice subdues us into reverential mood, for reply we are led to the graves on the hill, where the wild vines riot, and in whose shelter the rabbit is unafraid, and the song birds dwell. Victory? Surely here is only defeat. It is a tragedy rather than an epic. The children are scattered. The land belongs to the stranger. Nature, throwing on it all the mantle of ruin, is fast claiming her own. Where are the eager hopes of other years? Of what avail was the strong man's lifetime toil? What is the end of woman's faithful watch there in the wilderness over beauty, and love, and refining ways?

Men shout over victory; but standing here we cannot keep back the tears. It is a place



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## Heroes and Heroism

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for Niobe rather than the God of Victory. "Yes, it is a picture of our human life, and like life, with its disappointment, the end thereof is a hole in the ground."

Soft, my friend, you are revealing yourself now more than you are unveiling this hard mystery. The things that are seen are temporal. It is only the things which are unseen that are eternal. You are watching only the things that are temporal. Read the handwriting of the Eternal.

For what, after all, was this investment of a life in hard, grinding toil, in subduing the wilderness? Why did the woman work and not faint, wait and not be weary? Why did the man toil so prodigiously and the woman brood so lovingly? Was it for green fields without the home, and luxury within? Was it all for corn, and grain, and fruit? No. They would be the first to resent it. It was for soul they strove—their children's souls and their own. They were husbandmen of character.

If they, who sleep there, after their long la-



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## The Abandoned Farm

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bors, could have stood with us and seen, what the world knows, that their children are splendid men and women, more than fulfilling their mother's dream of sturdy integrity and abundant usefulness; if they could also see, as we see, that they have passed on fine audacities of soul to the grandchildren; instead of tears there would have broken upon our quiet, shouts of victory. They were builders for eternity, and they knew where to look for their reward. The recompense and victory of our human life is not a few tawdry material things. They will soon fade away—  
“For the world passeth away and the lust thereof.” The victory of human life is in character, the coin that passes current in the bank of eternity. ✓

We had a glimpse of it on that Sunday. Back at the inn in the valley, we met an old man, honored in the country side. When he found out the names of our friends, and where we had been, his tongue was loosed, and rich was his vocabulary of old, forgotten, lore. He called the man and woman, at whose



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graves we had stood, builders of the deserted house, by their first names, and he said, "I remember them well. Your father's name was John. It was a name to conjure with in all the Butternut Valley. It was music to the sad; it was inspiration to the strong; it was a benediction to little children. He stood for integrity like the rock, a sweetness as genial as the sunshine, a kindness like a father's, and the simple sincerity of a child. Yes, John was one of the treasures of the valley, and his name lingers in the memory of the old settlers like the breath of flowers."

I arose to my feet as the old man talked, for I knew I listened to the story of a hero. I knew afresh that nothing good is ever lost, and that character is its own monument.

Like a flash there comes to us a vision of the victory of life. In the quarry and in the studio, men fashion their cold and clumsy monuments to the conspicuous and the daring. But it is on the farm, and in the shop and home, that God fashions the character of His children, who need no stone nor



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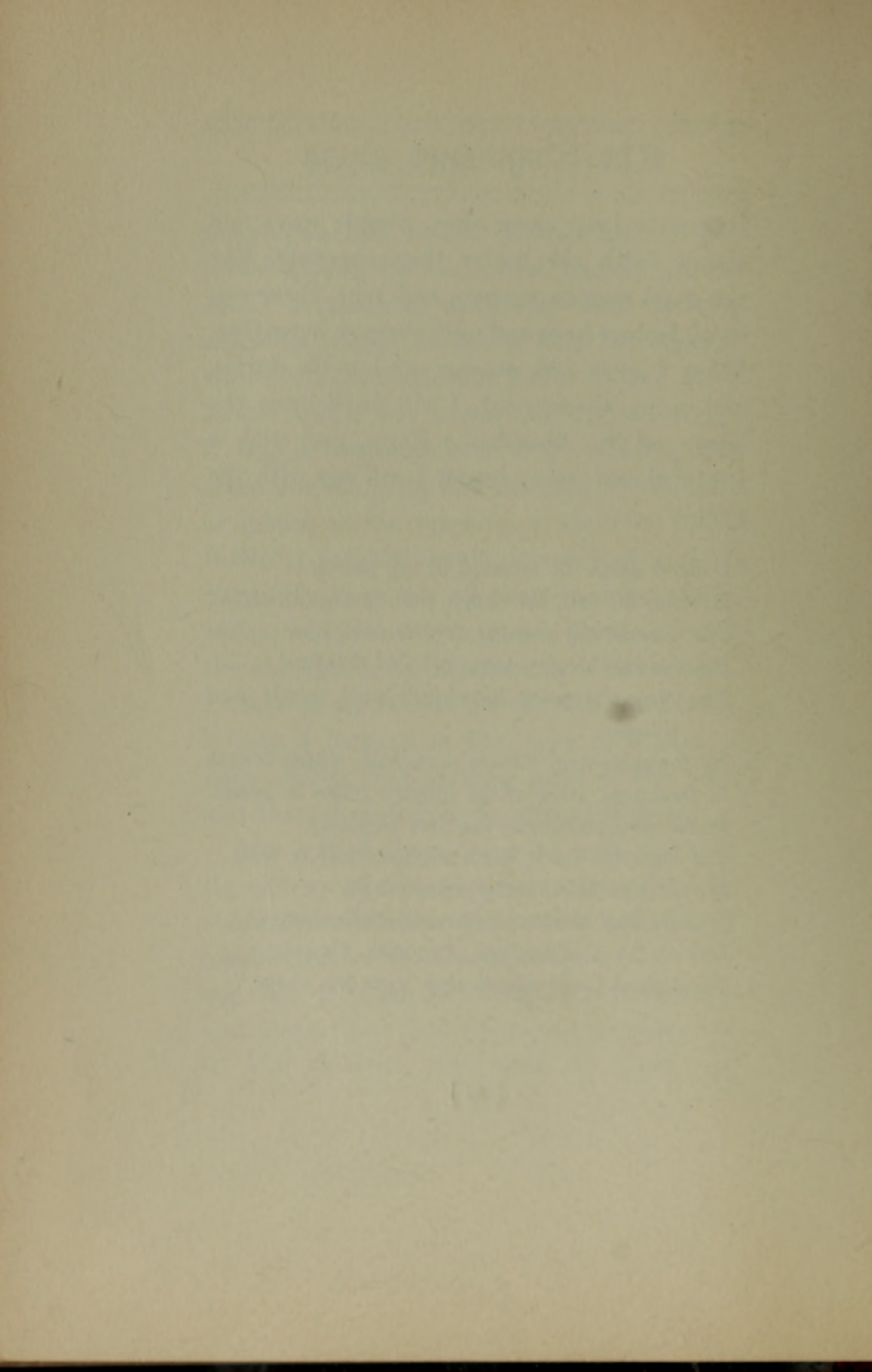
## The Abandoned Farm

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bronze to keep them alive. Simple ways and simple faith are better than coronets. For the good man or woman, and true, there can be no failure here and only victory hereafter. When I grow old, among my humble duties, and in my obscure lot, I will dwell upon the lesson of the Abandoned Farm, and with a grateful and sunny heart, I will say with the poet—

*"I stand upon the summit of my years;  
Behind, the toil, the camp, the march, the strife,  
The wandering and the desert; vast, afar  
Beyond this dreary way, behold! the Sea!  
The Sea o'erswept by clouds and winds and  
wings,  
By thoughts and wishes manifold, whose breath  
Is freshness, and whose mighty pulse is peace.  
Palter no question of the dim Beyond;  
Cut loose the bark; such voyage itself is rest;  
Majestic motion, unimpeded scope,  
A widening heaven, a current without care.  
Eternity!—Deliverance, Promise, Course!  
Time-tired souls salute thee from the shore."*







# The Abandoned Farm

## PART II



"The sounding cataract  
 Haunted me like a passion: the tall rock,  
 The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,  
 Their colours and their forms, were then to me  
 An appetite; a feeling and a love,  
 That had no need of a remoter charm,  
 By thought supplied, or any interest  
 Unborrowed from the eye. That time is past,  
 And all its aching joys are now no more,  
 And all its dizzy raptures. Not for this  
 Faint I, nor mourn nor murmur; other gifts  
 Have followed, for such loss, I would believe,  
 Abundant recompense. For I have learned  
 To look on nature, not as in the hour  
 Of thoughtless youth; but hearing oftentimes  
 The still, sad music of humanity,  
 Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power  
 To chasten and subdue. And I have felt  
 A presence that disturbs me with the joy  
 Of elevated thoughts: a sense sublime  
 Of something far more deeply interfused,  
 Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,  
 And the round ocean and the living air,  
 And the blue sky, and in the mind of man:  
 A motion and a spirit, that impels  
 All thinking things, all objects of all thought,  
 And rolls through all things. Therefore am I still  
 A lover of the meadows and the woods,  
 And mountains; and of all that we behold  
 From this green earth; of all the mighty world  
 Of eye and ear, both what they half create,  
 And what perceive; well pleased to recognize  
 In nature and the language of the sense,  
 The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,  
 The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul  
 Of all my moral being."

—WORDSWORTH. (Lines composed above Tin-  
 tern Abbey.)



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# The Abandoned farm

## PART II

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CAME upon it most unexpectedly. I was following the scarcely used road, because it was lonesome, and because I knew that somewhere near it, lost in the hills, and hidden in the primeval forests of pine, there was a lake, where the trout were unafraid, and where the wild things came to drink. I carried neither rod nor gun, only a watchful eye, and an open heart. I found the lake, although at first I passed it by, and had been unaware of its shining face. I saw the hunter's shack, and resolved to come back and camp in it for the night. I found the beaver's house. The mink and muskrat passed and repassed me, as I watched them, on their quest for food. The rabbit and I looked long into each other's eyes and neither spoke.



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## Heroes and Heroism

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A deer stood across the road, and I had spoken to him twice before he recognized me as one of a murderous race, and ran bounding into the wild wood.

Some birds held a long conversation with me, as we picked raspberries from the same briars.

Two squirrels played hide-and-seek with me for a while amid the branches. They scolded me soundly when I stopped under their well-laden hickory tree. But when I sat down to eat blue-berries, they grew more friendly, and forgave me quite, when I tossed them a nut.

Some crows found me out, and the thieves raised the cry of "robber." They scared the squirrels away, and wherever I went they followed me, calling, "robber," "robber." Not another wild thing could I see. The woods became as though uninhabited. It was just as I, so maligned and persecuted by the pesky crows, began to feel like a hunted being, and to wonder whether after all I were not a criminal, that all at once, at a turn of the road, I came upon the lost farm.



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## The Abandoned Farm

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The house was the first thing I stumbled on. And it appeared so suddenly that it seemed to rise right out of the ground. It was so old, so weirdly weatherbeaten, so ragged and tattered, that it reminded one of Rip Van Winkle after his sleep. One had to look twice to see if it were not a ghost-house. But when I began to explore, just as suddenly, I came upon the barn. The roof was fallen in, and the frayed hay, under it, looked like a tow-headed boy in a crownless hat.

I heard a voice. It was singing. I went out into the copse, to find whence it came. And lo! here gurgled a spring, young after a thousand years, and one could see a few timbers that showed where the spring house had been. Some unkempt, and lonesome looking, old-fashioned flowers showed where the garden used to be.

As I wandered through the open spaces of the second growth, I came upon the fields. Some of them were still large, and the moss-grown stone walls showed where one hundred acres had once been given to the plow. Here



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## Heroes and Heroism

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and there was an old apple-tree, laden with Baldwins and Sheep-noses: but they were surrounded now by the wild wood, whose vigorous trees despised them for so tamely submitting to man and his yoke of grafting.

At first, I could see nothing human left. For the buildings themselves had lost almost the marks of their builders. But, at last, I came across a gap into the pasture. Posts, still preserved, showed where there had been a set of bars. And on a beech tree, that stood there by a rock, and in a bank of ferns, and sweet briar, almost rubbed out and dim, I saw carved the figure of a great heart; and inside were the names Jim and Lucy. There Lucy had come for the cows at evening, and Jim had come with her. There, on that rock, had sat the lovers, and plighted their hearts, and whispered their sweet dreams. I think Nature's heart was touched then, and that is why she planted the sweet-briar rose there.

A little way off, I found a mound in the meadow, and on it were two graves. They had been dug in the same year, 1850. They who



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## The Abandoned Farm

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slept there had been born in the same year, 1776. They were John and Lucy Gray.

The name carved on the tree was a younger Lucy, their only child, maybe, and she bore her gentle mother's name, as well as face. What had become of this Lucy and her Jim? If alive, were they far away, and old now? Or did they die in a distant land? If alive, do they ever visit the rock, under the beech, and the graves on the mound?

From what I saw, I imagine the older ones were left a long time entirely lonely. Slowly their strength failed, and the house began to decay, and the farm to grow up, long before they died. It was when the first Lucy had come there, as a bride, that John had put the forest to flight, with axe and fire, and fenced in his goodly farm. Hope ran high then. But after the other Lucy was gone, hope died in the old folks' hearts, and they went about listless and drooping. It was then that the forest began to steal back into the fields unaware. At first getting a footing by the fence, and rock, and stream, it existed



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## Heroes and Heroism

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only by sufferance, and was all humble like a beggar. Then as the old man grew weaker, it waxed bolder, until at last it disputed his right to his own fields: and when he was gone, came on with a rush to destroy all he had wrought, even hiding his grave.

There is both romance and tragedy in an abandoned farm. To me, the pleasure seeker and traveller, it spoke a varied language. Almost like a living thing it lay across all my Summer.

Often, as I sat alone, I meditated on the Parable of the Abandoned Farm.

1. There is the wilderness side of life.\* It will never all be cultivated. It cannot be. It ought not to be. The wilderness is a sort of concrete Infinity. It is the borderland between man and the Infinite. We can conquer it more and more, but we can never encompass it. Its ministry for man lies in its refusal to come within his certain grasp. Therein lies its mystery and inspiration. Who would have all the earth a garden? Who would wish man

\* J. Brierly's Essays.



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## The Abandoned Farm

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could count all the stars, or tame or slay all the wild things, or see the rim of the universe? We want the wide-stretching sea, the mountains, the moors, the heavens, and the forests. "There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard." We all hear the call of the wild. At times we cannot resist it. The more we live in town, the more we hunger for the country.

I know a clerk in a drygoods store, whose life is a treadmill all the year. As Spring passes and Summer comes, he is hollow eyed, dispirited. You might pass him and think that he was a machine, or pack-horse. But when his vacation comes, he goes far into the country. He comes back, not only bronzed and invigorated, but there is a light in his face, and a sort of joy sets upon him, like an ecstasy. He bubbles with freshness; and he always brings back a poem with him, and it is no mean poetry either.

I know a preacher whose home is in the middle West. When vacation time comes, he always seeks the sea, and the sea of the



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## Heroes and Heroism

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Maine coast, where the mountains and the waves keep company with each other. A year or two ago, when his vacation was passed, he started home. He got as far west as Chicago. There he said to his wife, "You go on home. I have just telegraphed my church that I cannot come for another week. I am so hungry and homesick for the ocean that I must go back for one more glimpse." Maybe it was heredity, for he is a Manxman, and all his forefathers have been sailor folk. His father is the only one of his ancestors, for generations, who died in a bed, and not in a wreck. But after all it was the voice of the Infinite, beating out its message upon the Maine rocks, that he was famished for.

Wordsworth dwelt apart from men, the lover of the finest bit of scenery in England. And I do not think that anybody doubts but that it was the English lakes and the mountains of the Cumberland region that made him the second poet, maybe, in English literature.

Tennyson may be the poet of the palace and culture, but he is never so fine as when he



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## The Abandoned Farm

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catches the music of the sea. It was a matter of inspiration with him that he made his home on an island. People thought he was foolish, and that he threw his life away, when our own Emerson quit a city pulpit for village poverty. But we of a later generation, who are glad to claim him as the first American man of letters, know that he made no mistake. He lost a career, he gained a mission.

Nobody who ever heard Mr. Beecher, or is familiar with his wonderful spirit, or his power to touch the secret springs of human conduct, can fail to realize that both his rugged simplicity and his pathos were gifts of the fields. Old Litchfield County and the Hudson Palisades had gotten their horizon and their grandeur into his speech.

Moses never learned to write the Decalogue in the schools of Egypt or Pharaoh's court. It was when he came into the wilderness of Sinai that he came down to his people with the tables of the Law in his hand.

Elijah, the great hero of the Old Testament,



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## Heroes and Heroism

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was as unconventional as the Baptist, and, like him, avoided the town and its conventional ways. His dwelling place was the wilderness where he had the ravens for his friends, and where the lightnings were oft-times his companions.

Of all men, Jesus Christ was most in love with the out of doors. Whenever His sublime thoughts were shaken out into words, flowers, trees, brooks, and stars, like crystals, fell out. Most leaders have been solitary men. It was in Nature's companionship that they found their message.

If man could cut down all the trees; if he could wall in all the seas; if he could build his habitation over every mountain and moorland; if he could harness all the brooks; if he could count all the stars and planets; if he could turn the earth into something as finished and conventional as a drawing room, the people in it would become just as stupid as people in drawing rooms generally are. Poetry would be dead: yes, and I think religion also.



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## The Abandoned farm

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This wilderness, this unclaimed land, touches us with a thrill, like the hand of God. To climb up toward the summit of some truth, which we can never reach; to learn a little about a subject, which we can never fathom; to soar a little in the vault of imagination, which we can never explore; to come in touch with mystery, which we can never define, refreshes the soul, enlarges its horizon, and fills it with a wild joy of liberty, like the dweller in a tenement house getting out of doors. It is Deep calling unto the Deep that is within us.

2. But very different thoughts does the wilderness of life suggest. Here is the wilderness that was meant to be cultivated, but lies untouched; or here man has tried and failed. There is too much untouched wilderness. There are too many abandoned farms.

Most of us are like settlers in a new country. The land we cultivate is far less than the land which we neglect. Think of the waste lands of human life. I never see the crowded tenements of the poor, that I do not sigh



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## Heroes and Heroism

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over the stretches of unused land, west and east, where air is free, and where "if you tickle the earth with a hoe, she will laugh with the harvest."

This is only an illustration of all life. Few of us farm more than a moiety of our estate. One man trains his legs, he is a runner. Another man uses his arms, he is a blacksmith. Another man his eye, he is a painter or artist. A few men develop and use their minds, they are thinkers. For a few "out of the heart are the issues of life." I never saw a man, and you never did, who made the most of himself, by using all his body, and all his brain, and all his heart. Most, and, often times, the richest part, of every man is idle land.

The progress of the modern world in politics has consisted in its cultivation of waste land. If one goes back an hundred years, we find that the corner stone of all government was the principle of the Divine Right of Kings. Put in plain speech, that means that one man was born to rule over other men, and all other



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## The Abandoned Farm

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men were born to obey him. To all intents and purposes, in every nation, there was only one political being. All the rest, politically speaking, were waste ground.

But democracy has come, and it has come even among peoples that are ruled by kings. And democracy is nothing more than this—the use of the political ability which is in every man. Without saying that democracy is more just, and that under its sway there is more happiness, I would say that the world is far richer in political wisdom than it used to be. Our riches have come from utilizing what our fathers threw away. When George Washington spurning a crown, declined the presidency for a third term, all his fellow citizens began to look for presidential timber in his neighbors and fellow patriots. Some of the richest political finds of all ages have been discovered among the plain people. This once wasted domain of the common man, being put under cultivation, has wonderfully responded, and the world has had such statesmen as Garibaldi and



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## Heroes and Heroism

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Gladstone, Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin.

I have not mentioned the greatest of them all yet. Whenever the political possibilities of the plain people are thought of, we always think of that man who was born in a hut, who went to school less than a year, whose biography he himself said was "the short and simple annals of the poor," who never saw college, and yet, when he sat in the presence of his cabinet, seven of whom were college men, and among the greatest men of their generation, Proctor Knott said, "If a teeter was balanced and the members of the cabinet were all placed at one end, and the President on the other, he would send the seven wise men flying into space."

The simple reason why literature has been enriched a thousand fold in modern times is because it has become the voice of the plain people. Once book writers were slaves, and all the books they wrote were about kings and nobles, their lords and masters. Literature then was a poor, barren thing. Then Dr.



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## The Abandoned Farm

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Johnson came, and he was independent, even in Grub Street. Then Charles Dickens came, and found his heroes and heroines among the waifs and the wastes of London City, and book writing became a new art.

Not only was the heart of the world touched by a vision of the nobility and wealth, often times found in a garret, but the plain people themselves were thrilled by the story of their undiscovered heroism. And they began, by self-denial and by large inspiration, to anoint their children for leadership. After a hundred years or more, we see that the great leaders, for the most part, have been the children of the plain people. Dickens came from his crust, Thackeray came from his garret, Burns came from his plow, Wordsworth came from his mountains, and Owen Kildare came from his saloon.

It is of the pearls, that lie buried there, that one must think, when he looks out upon the mire and the waste of the modern cities. The slums, with all their wretched ignorance, and poverty, and sin, are the failures of the mod-



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## Heroes and Heroism

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ern city, for which there can be no excuse. They are a blunder, and they are a crime. No matter how many buildings we may pile up, no matter how much money we may accumulate, no matter how much art we may gather into our treasuries, so long as we have these great stretches of waste domain, with their armies of disease, and squalor, and crime, we can never be rich, and we can never be without the stain of blood upon our garments. It is our poverty and our disease. So much waste land is the sign of the lazy, or the ignorant, or the bad husbandman. The city that will reclaim these waste places and this wasted life, will not only become the city of God, but will become the city of poets, and painters, and heroes, and saints. There is no use to denounce them, and it is not enough to pity them. It is folly to fence them off, for all the time Jesus Christ is saying, "whosoever sins ye shall forgive on earth, are forgiven in heaven." By which He means that it is the function of His church, and of all His children, to release the



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## The Abandoned farm

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captive, to set free the bound, and uplift the fallen, to enfranchise the oppressed, and to change the wreckage and waste of human life into its wealth and glory.

This thought of wasted possibility will come startlingly close home to us, if we apply it to the regions of moral and religious possibilities. How many men do you know who utilize all their moral and spiritual domain? For the most of us, these regions are well nigh an untamed wilderness.

Most men are negatively good. It is true that they do not bring forth poisonous plants; but they do not grow corn or wheat either. They do not steal, they do not commit murder, they do not have to go to jail; but on the other hand, they are not using all their integrity, or boundless love, and are not much like Jesus Christ.

They remind us of a certain little girl. She had been naughty at the table, where the guests were, and her mother sent her upstairs. When she reached the first landing, from which she could see into the dining



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## Heroes and Heroism

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room, she called out, "Mother, excuse me, but I want to say something. Mother, you know the Ten Commandments," and she began to say over the Commandments. When she had finished the first one, she said, "I have not broken that commandment, mother." And so on, until she came to the last. And after each one she said, "I have not broken that commandment, mother. Then why do you punish me?" The mother said, "That is true, my child, but you have not been obedient, and sweet, and lovely, as a little girl ought to be. Go upstairs, and when I get through dinner, I will come up and we will talk it over." Then she called back, "O you are a hard mamma. You want me to be too good. If I were as good as you want me to be, the girls over at the Kenwood School would say, 'there goes that little Marjorie, her father is a minister, and she thinks she is as good as God.'"

Now isn't that the attitude of a great many grown-up children? If they have not stolen, or lied, or committed adultery, or murder,



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## The Abandoned Farm

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are they not apt to think that they are pretty good people? To keep out of jail is enough. If you were to ask them to cultivate all the rich resources of their nature and become good unto gentleness, and meekness, and peace, and love, and tender thoughtfulness, would they not think that you were a hard master and that you expected too much? A great many people in the moral and spiritual realm are like the poor mountain whites, who live in their wretched cabins and raise a little bit of corn, and fatten a couple of razor back hogs, and drive one mule, and wear their trousers with one suspender, and manage to get corn bread and fitch to eat, and a scant supply of tobacco and snuff, and call that living. Whereas many of their lands are rich, and if they were industrious enough to care for and cultivate them, they could become prosperous husbandmen, and live in good houses and wear decent clothes, and have a bountiful table, and have for their children the chance of education. It is the unworked land that is the cause of their poverty.



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## Heroes and Heroism

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We reclaim the wild nature of the heart only in spots. In our moral lives there is a vast deal of lost land.

3. Another truth the Abandoned Farm teaches is the struggle of life.

Anybody reared on a farm will never mistake farming for a soft snap. He remembers the rising before day on frosty mornings to milk the cows; the heat of the long corn row, and the harvest field; and, if he has arithmetic enough, can to his dying day count the chores of night and morn. They who follow the plow, or try to replenish the magically dwindling wood-pile, have little complaint of sleepless nights, and do not die from lack of exercise.

If they be pioneers, the strenuous life becomes grim, as they battle with forests, and wolves, and fight with hunger at a hoe's length. The pioneer has to sleep sometimes; the weeds never seem to, and with them the night is as the day. Moreover, he can hardly get up early enough to keep the crows out of the corn in Spring, and, in Autumn, he



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## The Abandoned Farm

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cannot stay up late enough to keep the frost off. Literally, "he earns his bread by the sweat of his brow," and eternal vigilance is the price of his safety.

Nature is a stern overseer. While she pays those who work in her fields to the last penny, she never overpays, and refuses all careless work, and gives no half-holidays. If the husbandman grows slipshod, or unfaithful, in his fields, Nature counts him unworthy of his stewardship, and instantly begins to undo all he has done, and give his farm back to the wilderness. She never makes any allowance for old age. For soon about the place of the aging man, whose sons have all gone to the city, she displays the sign "An Abandoned Farm." Long before the old man has sunk into the grave, the weeds and bushes, he long thought dead, will return, in wild profusion, to crowd him out of his own doorway.

The law of the fields is the law of the soul. ✓  
Man's moral wealth is won only by struggle  
and maintained only by struggle. Not to do



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## Heroes and Heroism

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evil is not enough. To do nothing is evil. Vigilance, eternal vigilance, is the price of character. Herein lies the glory of age and its shame also.

It is not till a long time is past that the man, who practices economy, sees the fruit of his sacrifice. At first his little store grows slowly. But after twenty years, he begins to reap a rich harvest. The young scholar is apt to become discouraged. No matter how honestly he plies his craft, wisdom comes slowly, and recognition scarce at all. The undiscerning crowd passes him by, and worships some superficial man. But wait until middle life has set in, and now his hard won treasures of learning have swollen to a mighty sea, and he can pour out like a flood.

Until he was forty-seven, Webster had only done well. There were showier men than he. All those long years of preparation, what did they amount to? This, after that time he stood for orator of the world, inexhaustible, magnificent. Once more was "Daniel preferred above Presidents and Princes." His



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## The Abandoned Farm

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harvest time had come, and lo! for every sacrifice to buy wisdom, for every day of toil, and every night of reading and self-mastery, at last was his reward of power, sixty and an hundred fold!

When are men noblest? Late in life, when their investments in virtue and truth have had time to grow, and compound themselves into rare character. It is in Autumn we gather the finest fruit.

And when are men weakest? Likewise, the answer comes, late in life, when, at last, the hidden faults and the secret sins stand revealed. Then is the great transgression.

On the mountain side I saw a great proud tree fall with a crash, when the wind was low. The wonder I could not know till I drew near. Then I saw a secret decay that had, for years, been festering in its heart. While it slept in security, the hidden disease had worked. I saw a shrub, all glorious with rarest flowers, wither and die on a Summer's day. About the roots I digged, and found that all Summer it had secretly fed a para-



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## Heroes and Heroism

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site. While it smiled its proud beauty by sunlight and starlight, the worm had feasted and fattened on its heart.

From childhood David has been a favorite with us among old time heroes. We loved his ruddy face and rustic beauty, when we saw him first with the sheep on the hills. We had prophesied great things of him, even if the old prophet had not spoken. We were bewitched when, at set of sun, he twanged his lute. We knew his sweet music could drive away death, and so we suggested that they send for him to play before Saul, when he sat in madness. We shouted when we saw him kill Goliath. We cried with the crowd, as he rode beside the King, "He hath slain his tens of thousands." On the day of his coronation lustily we cried, "Long live the King." The nation never had such a king, nor such a poet.

Will you ever forget that day when we first heard that our King and hero had plotted the death of Uriah, after he had stolen his beautiful wife? Midnight seemed to fall on high



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## The Abandoned Farm

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noon. Our moral systems were in chaos. In our haste we believed in no man. How could such moral calamity overtake one whose whole life had been so exemplary? How could lust kindle a conflagration in the heart of one who had sung such psalms?

A long time after, it all became plain. As a youth, this man had hot blood. He had curbed his passions, not destroyed them. Through long life he had, in secret thought, banqueted with lust. He rested in security because he never allowed his foul thoughts to become actions. But there came a day when a great temptation was upon him, then these foul thoughts become armed men within him. He had fed them, and, strong, they would no more lie silent. They had grown while he slept, and at last his thoughts would no more listen to reason. They mastered his acts, and King David was an adulterer. His secret sin had blossomed into the great transgression! He had ceased to keep the wilderness within him.

This is the tragedy of life. There are so



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## Heroes and Heroism

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many unkept promises; so many unfulfilled boyhoods; so many forgotten dreams. For after all does not the exuberance of youth lie in its hope, and does not the despair of old age lie in its failure? How many of us start well, and after we have run awhile, turn aside! Has any man here fulfilled either his mother's dream for him, or his own expectations? When we have found out that our life was hard, have we not lowered our ideal, or abandoned our plan? In us all has there not been a lowering of youthful enthusiasms and dreams? In many a man we meet is there not somewhat of the Abandoned Farm?

Are not the early barriers and resolutions against sins fallen, like old fences, into decay? Have not old habits, or weakness of appetite, or disposition, crept back, after we have tried to dig them up, because we have grown careless? Was David when he was old, not thinking of his falling away from youthful purity and moral enthusiasms, when he sighed and cried out, "O to drink again from my father's spring"? For a man grown



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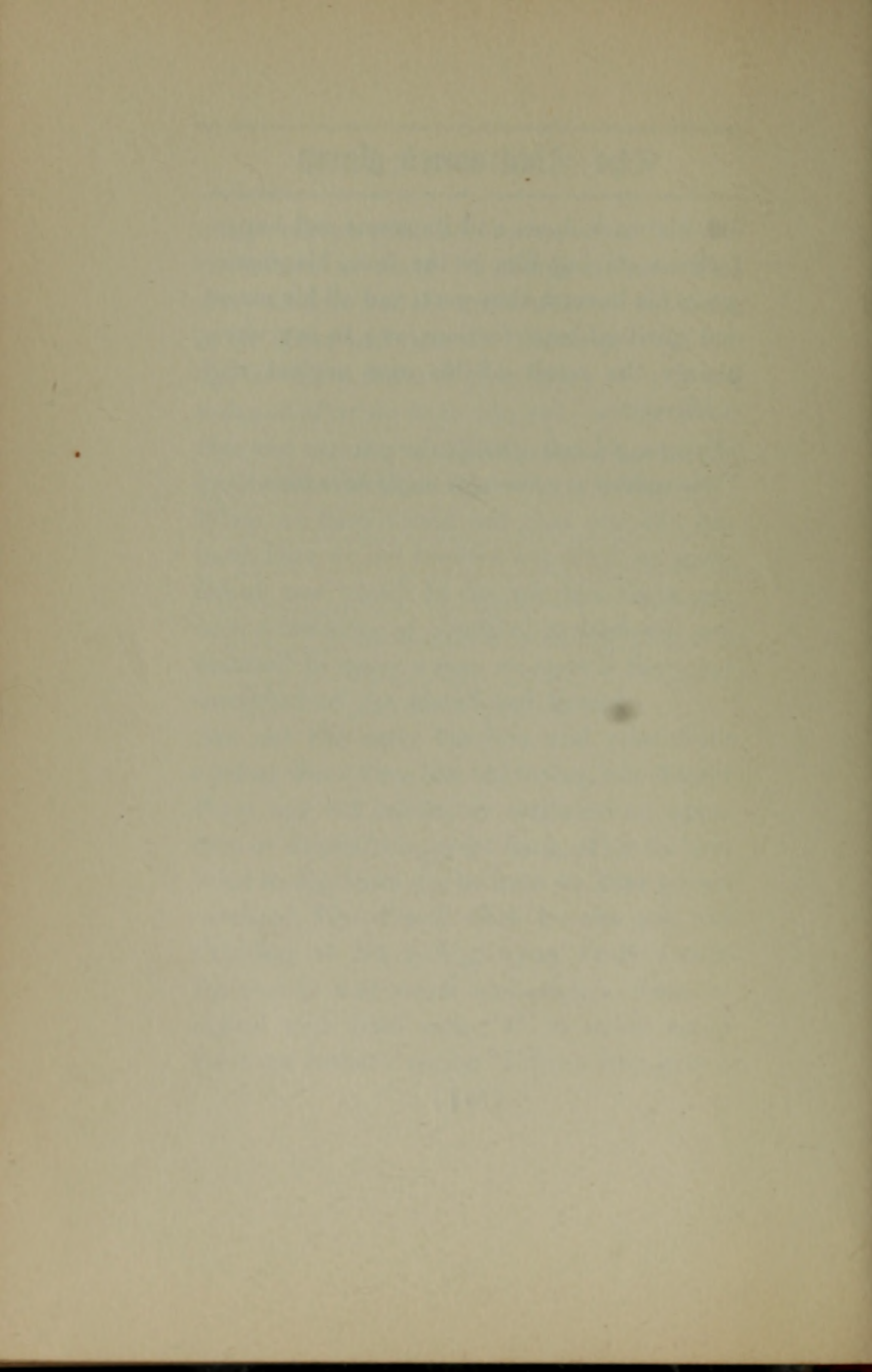
## The Abandoned Farm

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old, his work done, and its seams and imperfections staring him in the face, his chance gone, his harvest time past, and all his moral and spiritual imperfections, not to say vices, plainly the result of his own neglect and carelessness,

*“Of all sad words of tongue or pen  
The saddest are these, ‘it might have been.’”*







## The Old Minister



*"Abides, from year to year, a genuine Priest,  
The shepherd of his flock; or, as a king  
Is styled, when most affectionately praised,  
The father of his people. Such is he;  
And rich and poor, and young and old, rejoice  
Under his spiritual sway. He hath vouchsafed  
To me some portion of a kind regard;  
And something also of his inner mind  
Hath he imparted—but I speak of him  
As he is known."*

—WORDSWORTH.



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## The Old Minister

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COMPLAINT has been made that the minister has fared hardly in literature. Burns has set the world laughing at the Parson who was "unco guid."

George Eliot and Dickens have made us despise him of hypocritical talk and unctuous ways. In the modern drama, the parson is usually effeminate, and if he is good, he is good for nothing. But all this bearing down hard on the ministerial masquerade, I take to be, at heart, jealous reverence for the parson who is real. Men are quick to brand the counterfeit, because they prize the genuine. And they know genuineness when they see it. This is proved by Victor Hugo's and Hall Caine's Bishops, whom every reader calls his bishops too. Indeed, when we remember their transfigured faces, and with them put Wordsworth's village parson, we know that



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## Heroes and Heroism

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the minister has an immortal place in our literature, as he has in our hearts. Only he must be genuine. Men cannot tolerate alloy in the shepard of their souls.

So I recognized the man of God, when I first saw him on the village street. It was not his low crowned hat, nor his cassock vest. These things marked only the churchman. When I met him an hour later, at the table of the country inn, it was not his manners, nor anything he said—these things only marked him as a gentleman of the old school, and a scholar. It was his simple ways, his sincerity, his sunny heart, nay, shall I use an over-worked phrase, and say, it was the *atmosphere* of his personality that subdued me into reverence, and made my heart go out to him, as a disciple unto a master.

He changed the climate of the place, and my soul rejoiced in the breath of Spring. He was all unconscious of his power, and never dreamed that he had brought more rest to a tired man than the sweet country fields with their little rivers. He did not think of me



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## The Old Minister

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at all, nor did he dream that I was in need of a physician. He only knew that I was an idle traveller in search of forgetfulness of the city, and its cares. So he was careful to put me on the path for the mountain view, or give me the pass word into Nature's solitude.

But when I touched the hem of his garment, virtue came out of him. In the secret of his presence, I felt care stealing out of my heart, and the murky atmosphere of life clarify, until I could see the realities and verities clearly, and 'heaven lay all about me,' as in infancy.

His story has about it something apostolic. Like St. John, in his early years, he was the companion of the great. Like himself, his father, his grandfather, and his great grandfather had been ministers; and all were graduates of Yale. His grandfather, as the author of many books, which our fathers studied in school, helped lay the foundation of New England letters. This man himself was a classmate and chum of Phillips Brooks in the Boston Latin School.



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## Heroes and Heroism

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Like that of the Apostles, too, was the beginning of his ministry. He had got to be more than thirty years of age, and was in a mining community, where there was no church, and men could say, "No man careth about my soul," when the vision of Christ came. "Feed my sheep," was the word, and he entered upon his ministry through the gateway of a great renunciation. All through the years this same spirit has mantled him. Wherever the call came he has gone, and God, who hides his violet and wild rose in the country places, has given this bishop of souls to those children of His who were unshepherded. All his life he has borne the burden of country churches.

It was in a mission I found him. The stipend was too small for home making, and here he was like St. John, when he was old, alone on his island. Not the least of his privations is his exile from loved ones. But his lonely hours are beguiled with a song of gratitude because he is counted worthy to serve, and when he yearns for wife and child, he goes



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## The Old Minister

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on his parochial rounds in cure of souls, and like the Master, he speaks of the poor and says, "These are my kinsmen," and of the orphans he says, "These are my children."

I heard his name through all the country side, and when men spoke it, it was with a tone of reverence, and with a certainty of goodness that was good to hear. Some children of sorrow said, "You ought to hear him read the service. When it falls from his lips, you seem to hear the soul speaking, and you feel that God fills the place." I had no chance to hear him preach. I had no need to.

The man himself was the sermon.

The old man's simple life gives one the sense of altitude.

If you climb a mountain, you get above the fog, and clearly see your way. In the thick of the fight, it is impossible to know how goes the battle. Solitude and elevation are the watch towers, where men see, and know the movements of the plains.

If you want to know America, lusty like a



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young giant to run a race, all amuck with slavery and the slave trade, and only intent in its worship of the Goddess-of-getting-On, do not listen to the ticker on Wall Street, or the clack of tongues in the State House. Go to Concord and sit silent before an old man "too busy to make money," and you will come away with a shining face and with the *Credo*, "I believe in conscience."

I was dwelling in my mind, the other day, on the glories of the Victorian Age of English letters. It almost outshines the Elizabethan. Of all the historians, novelists, essayists, poets, and orators, who is the most far reaching in power? I had to answer the name of a poet, whose fame while he lived was scanty, and whom the critics refused to call a poet at all. I mean William Wordsworth. Why is he the greatest force of the Victorian Age? He had not music like Tennyson; he knew not the soul to its bypaths like Browning. Yet, he did more than they all for England, and he did it by giving England viewpoint and vision. From his mount



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of "Plain Living and High Thinking," he enabled English eyes to untangle the tangled web of a sordid time, and see that life, at bottom, was integrity of soul. From that glimpse at Rydal Mount, England again got her bearing as a Puritan nation.

So the old minister in the upstate valley is a watch tower, from which one gets a true view of our crowded and panting city life. Here the air is so thick with dust that our vision is distorted, as the landscape through a cheap and crazy window pane.

Here, clothes, and houses, and money seem to be the realities. A man must wear a certain coat to gain entrance to a dinner: he must have so large a house to have his wife in society: and he must have such and such a bank account to be counted as a man at all. The synonym for a man's getting on is getting rich, or getting known.

If a man is in business, he is in it. His reading, his church, his family, are incidents, or luxuries, like his amusements; his business is getting money. If he fails to get rich, he is



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counted as a failure, and his poverty he feels like a disgrace.

If he is a writer, he writes for the market; and is rated in Dun's like the shoe manufacturer; and men talk about the editions his book runs and how much he gets a word.

Even the pulpit is measured by these standards. Is a church thinking of a man for its pastor? "What salary has he been getting?" is the first inquiry of the committee. Shall we consult him and enlist him in our great public cause and give him a place on our programme? That depends on the size of his church. How are the finances? Do you see his name often in the paper? The one redeeming feature of it all is that even our laymen's cheeks burn, when we find some minister lowering himself to the standards we have set, and exploiting himself in the papers; or see religious movements, running a press bureau like a patent medicine concern.

All this mad struggle for money, and popularity, begets heart burnings and discontent, until one of the questions on which men are



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about evenly divided is the ancient one—"Is life worth what it costs?" We are quite honest when we say, "Life after all is hardly worth while, and disappointment is the lot of all." And the result is that, save in theory, we are not sure that "God's in His heaven and all's well with the world." And we are a feverish, nervous, dyspeptic race, regretful of the past and afraid of the future.

With the old man on his watch tower, there is only serenity, gladness, and faith. It is because there he has corrected the refraction, and sees things as they really are. His vision gives him peace.

With him, it is not poetry, but fact.

*The rank is but the guinea stamp,  
The man's the gowd, for a' that.*

He knows that God is in His heaven. In his quiet retreat he sees His heaven, and there is no smoke to hide God's stars.

He, from his altitude of a placid spirit, sees all the winding labyrinth of human ways, and all its strife, and confusion, as they who



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view a landscape from a mountain. He has viewpoint and vision. He sees all spread out before him, to borrow a phrase from President Eliot, "the durable satisfactions of life."

1. The first durable satisfaction of life is a man's joy in his work, whatever it is. If you have no satisfaction in your work, give it up. Your continuance is a sort of profanity.<sup>1</sup>

By that, of course, is not meant that if you are in your true work, you will never grow weary, or discouraged. Or that you will rejoice in every part of its drudgery. But satisfaction in your work means that you believe in it, and glory in it, and that the very doing of it is to you a recompense and a reward.

If I may refer to Wordsworth again, it was because of what he felt about his poetry that the critics stamped on him. It was also because he took it seriously that he became the great figure in the Victorian era. He said,

<sup>1</sup> Addresses of President Eliot.



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"I am no idle singer of a day." He believed he had a heaven-sent message, as much as any prophet ever had. That is what Wordsworth meant when he said, "Vows were made for me," and that "I must be considered as a teacher or nothing."

That is the very thing that is lacking in so much of our modern work. The absence of it is the fecund mother of our unrest and our unhappiness.

It is creeping into all our lives and poisoning all our happiness—this false notion that we do our work for pay and nothing more. Our work is our necessity, but our life is outside of it.

This is so prevalent that in the industrial world multitudes are clamoring for more pay, and at the same time they are giving scantier service. And the captains are making shoddier goods for higher dividends, with the final purpose of filling their pockets and retiring.

In Winston Churchill's "Coniston" there is an account of a poor artist, who painted the



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picture of the beloved foster child of a rich boss. It was far and away the best picture that he had ever painted, and his inspiration for it was his love for the sweet girl. When it was done, the boss offered him gold, which he refused to receive. He finally said, "Don't you know that men can do things for which they do not expect pay?" Jethro Bass could not make anything out of it. It was entirely a shock and a surprise to him that men do not do their best work for money. But he had fineness of soul enough left to instinctively say, though he could not understand the miracle, "You're more of a feller than I took you for." And yet the fact remains that no man ever did anything worth while for money alone.

Charles Dickens once wrote a story for the New York *Ledger* for which he was to receive ten thousand dollars, and he dashed it off in less than three weeks. You do not know what story that was; the world scarcely reads it now. But the world has never ceased to read, and weep over, "David Copperfield,"



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which he wrote in the days before his popularity came, and into which he put his life. To his dying day it was the child of his love, as well as his pen.

The reason why authorship and the ministry are not thought of much by rich men, talking about careers for their sons, is because they are poisoned with the thought that the end of the week's labor is the pay roll of Saturday night. And these things do not pay large wages. I really think that the reason why, in the past, men of commerce have stood lower, in the estimation of society, than the soldier, or the writer, or the minister, is because they found that the trader bartered for gain, while these professional men have had a mission, and found their delight in the country they defended, in the truth they proclaimed, or in the ministry to men which they loved. I have an idea that the deep reason why these vocations have fallen into disrepute is after all because, not only the world, but men who are in them, have been smitten with a mania



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for gain, and have been after the "loaves and fishes."

This, anyway, is evident—the minister, who nowadays may earn fifteen thousand dollars a year, does not stand as high, in the reverence of men, as he did in the days when the prophets went forth, taking with them only one coat, and a scrip, and a staff. I know also, that, in the honor of men, I had rather be old Dr. Johnson, in his threadbare coat among the Fleet Street hacks, than to be the author of a modern story that brought in a royalty of \$25,000 the first year.

It is the mistaken thought that we labor for money that brings about work that rips, goods that are shoddy, food that is adulterated, industry that is war, and wealth that, like blood money, will not let its owner sleep. It is a necessity for most of us to earn our daily bread. And we must earn it by our daily handicraft. We have a right to expect it to provide for our temporal existence. But after all, that is its least recompense. It is not worthy of us, and we are not worthy of



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it, unless it also provides for us satisfaction of heart.

If an honest man is to find satisfaction in his work, then he cannot put his hands to anything which is not genuine, and which is not honest. Right away robbery becomes a lost profession, and every saloon is a bar without a man behind it.

If we really knew that one of life's deepest satisfactions was in the joy of our toil, then our young men would think carefully in choosing their work, and having chosen it, it would be for better or for worse, richer or poorer, until death did them part. There is nothing more pitiful, it seems to me, in the lives of our young men, than to see how unsuited they are for what they are following, unless it is to see how flippantly men pass from one kind of work to another. If a man believes that his mission is commerce, and if by trade he is to express his message to the world, then, while he may change from one kind of commerce to another, it is hard to see how he can lightly fling it away to do



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an entirely different kind of work, even though the pay is better. If a man really feels that his mission in life is to teach the young, then how can he lightly, for the sake of a gilded house, leave off teaching the young, to sell hair pins, or to manufacture cologne? For after all no amount of money can make up to him the loss of happiness, and the loss of self-respect, which would come to him, if he engaged in a business which he despised. Richard Croker's money would not induce a good man to engage in Richard Croker's trade. On the other hand, do you think that poverty took away Sam Adams's joy, or impaired, for a single day, the satisfaction which John Milton found in his great life?

If men, everywhere, could come to look for joy in the performance of their tasks, and would count themselves rich in proportion to their fidelity and excellence, they would not be filled with unhappiness and uneasiness every time the stock market went down, or money became dear.



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That was the sort of man the old minister was. He was poor, but he did not know it. He was obscure, but he did not feel it. He did not have a competency laid up against old age, and now he was already old, but he did not worry. Secure and serene he stood above the pride of the world and the strife of tongues, counting his life a great success, because God had put His work into his hands, and deeming himself rich because, out of his sowing on the stony ground and in the hidden places, lo! there blossomed before him the harvest — some thirty fold, some sixty fold, and some an hundred fold. And as the photographer or artist catches some glimpse of upland glen, or mountain brow, and will put it on the canvas, and bring it down to the city, or crowded valley, to remind tired men of rest, and vexed ones of serenity, so this glimpse of the old man, having filled my soul with inspiration and benediction, I have brought back and held up in the sunlight with the hope that it may touch other hearts as it touched mine. It is



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a flower I have gathered from the highlands. And though it may have faded in my hands, and lost something of its fragrance, I still hold it up to you, as a memento of the peace and imperturbable serenity of a man, unto whom God has called, and who has found satisfaction in his life.

2. A man never finds satisfaction in his work, until he finds in it more of an outlet than an inlet.

An outlet, of course, is where the river enters the sea: and an inlet is where the sea enters the land. The sea gives the land its spices and silks. The river feeds the sea. "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

We talk about the wealth in the fields and the mines and their enrichment of man. The wealth is in the man: it is the man who enriches the fields and hills. All that the fields hold is worth nothing until the man comes and lays his hand on it, and virtue goes out of him into soil, and wood, and mineral.

Maize is a wild weed, the food of mice—man puts himself in it and it becomes the golden



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corn. Gold and silver are as worthless as stones—man makes them precious beyond a king's ransom. The forest is a wood pile—man changes the trees into homes and temples, and the soil into a garden. Words are sounds, the wind knows them—man makes the music of the poem. Man is the treasure house. All values come out of his brain and heart.

The so-called vocations of man—his farming, his buying and selling, his teaching, his homemaking, his writing or speaking, his manufacturing—are then expressions of the man within upon the world without, and activities of that power within him whereby he transmutes his wealth into the world. The work of a man then is a distributing, not a collecting agency. With God he is a creator and giver; and what we call work is man at his world making.

The supremely great always know this. That is the cry of Luther down there at Worms. "Here I stand, and I can do no other, God helping me" was his answer to their demand



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that he should leave off telling the truth, and be a preacher for popularity, and an ecclesiastic seeking preferment. "I must work the works of Him that sent me" is the way a greater than Luther defined His vocation, not because it paid, for its only earthly wage was poverty, persecution, and shame. And these, and such as they, have their reward. It is the satisfaction of doing something worth while, and doing it in a worthwhile way. It is enough honor to be a partner with God, and to know that you are making men richer and the world better. That is the secret of content: and all content is divine.

If that means anything, it means that a man never gets satisfaction in life, that will last, until he feels that he is a giver. That is the holy joy that comes into a woman's heart with motherhood which no pain nor hardship can destroy. It looks out upon us from every Madonna's eyes, and composes the song that brightens all our firesides. We call these homely cares women's drudgery, and complain because they receive no wage. They



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know they have their happiness, in sweetness beyond an angel's cup; and their reward is beyond an angel's praise. It is only when men are benefactors, that men are deeply happy. You would not wonder at a millionaire's gifts, if you could only know how much more joy he gets out of the hospital he has built for the poor, than out of the home he has built for himself. He only wonders and regrets that he did not give as he gained, and so, all his life, drunk a little at the feasts of joy rather than eaten at the crusts of discontent.

It is not good for a man to be an almoner whether of charity or good fortune. He was made to be a benefactor, and until he is a giver, he finds neither self satisfaction nor happiness. We all say that in a tone of platitude and are thinking of the rich in gold who are miserly. We have never thought of ourselves as givers at all. Yet One, whose eye was keener than ours, saw a woman giving a penny—all her store, and He pronounced her gift more than that of the rich man, who



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put a whole talent into the treasury. Besides, money is, generally speaking, the last thing we can give, and, always, it is the least thing. "I do not want your money and I would be insulted by it," is the world's real cry. "I want your knowledge, your friendship, your confidence, your example, and your helping hand."

Daniel Webster marched single-handed and alone straight up from a poor hill farm to the proudest place in the American nation. When he did that he gave to the children of New Hampshire more wealth than her people or visitors ever earned. And Webster ended as he began, a poor man. A man's greatest gift to his generation is always himself.

It was so with this old man of the hills. He had nothing—not even enough to bury him. He never did have anything but his life, his scholarship, and his children, his sunny confidence in man, and his unfaltering trust in God. And he had given them all with a lavish hand—his sons to his country; his life to



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his parish; his scholarship to rustics, who could not understand, and to their sons, to whom it was a very star in the East; his confidence to the prisoner, and the men in whom nobody ever believes; and his trust in God to the souls, who, dying but for him, had gone to sea without a pilot, and living, would have been foolish enough to say, "There is no God."

His reward? A good name written in gratitude on the hearts of a humble multitude; and a serene satisfaction, and an abiding joy, that nothing could ruffle or destroy. He was afraid neither of robbers, nor moth, nor fire, nor the "bears" of the street. Nor did he want anything, save a little missionary money, for a little work over which he prayed and wept. And he soon got that—he put away his pipe for a year and gave up his two weeks' vacation and little trip to the haunts he loved. Then he had his missionary money, and he wanted nothing beside. Not money, for did not his five hundred dollars a year pay his two-hundred-and-fifty-dollar



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board bill, buy his single suit, his four or five books, furnish his hundred and fifty dollars to the absent, and still allow him fifty dollars a year for charity and pocket money? No, he did not need anything. His gentle ways made him sought for by every house where his presence breathed a benediction. If he should grow sick or die, hands, as tender as children's, would minister unto him. And he needs no granite for a monument. The love of a whole people will embalm his unobtrusive fame. For him to live is indeed to be a Christ, and to die, who knows what gain? The man, whose life is an outlet for goodness, need never fear that he himself will thirst, or the stream of his sweet content will ever run dry.

3. The third durable satisfaction of life is religion. Indeed, it is the ground of all the rest. Of course that sounds like preaching. And yet I do not write it because it ought to belong to a sermon. This is not so much a sermon as an interpretation.

All writers have to set down religion as the



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foundation fact, when they write deeply about men. Gibbon did, in writing about Rome, though he called it a superstition. Shakespeare certainly never preached religion, though he recognized it as the chief corner stone of the great English character, which he strove to portray.

It was because his religion was the center and the source of his noble life, that this old man moved me so deeply. I do not refer to his manner of service, or his ritual. That is merely the conventionality of a man's religion, his manners, so to speak, and tells us something of his intelligence, his breeding, and his bringing up. Worship is the etiquette of the soul, and like all etiquette, it may be thoughtless, and heartless, and hide a mean spirit, or it may be cold, and formal, and half conceal a great soul.

I am not trying to tell you either about all the old man's beliefs. Theology is only the definition of a man's religion, his opinions, and theories, which are as interesting as his opinion about politics, or his theories in psy-



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chology, or the raising of children, and not much more. It is true they generally define the man, however crude and inadequate they are about God, and we set down his mentality, the books he has read, and his openness to truth. But even the devils "believe and tremble," and the best men and the deepest, who have ever lived, have despaired of ever setting forth their faith in speech.

The greatest religious teacher who ever lived was not content to inaugurate worship, and reveal truth. He said, "I am the Way": He said, "I am the Truth": but He went on to a deeper word, "I am the Life." "In Him we live and move and have our being," said the great disciple, and a man's living of his life in God's is a man's religion. A man has as much religion as he has God in him, whatever his creed, or cult.

We often hear that in words. It is not often so manifest in lives. That was the wonder of the old man. He did not need his profession, or confession, to proclaim his religion. He breathed it. The man was a religion: and



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God was in the man. He was a child of God, and his very thought, deed, word, his poise and serenity, betokened whose son he was. He did not say it, though he might have, "I and the Father are one." So far as he could apprehend the Father's way and will, it was his way and will. He saw all men from God's standpoint of love, and their sins made him sorry and ready to give himself for their healing. "I must be about my Father's business"—that was his life calling. "I go to my Father"—that was his name for the journey, now no longer far away, that men call death. "The works I do I do not for myself, but my Father worketh in me." He knew his was not the might, and all he could do to help frail men, was to take their weakened hands and put them in the hands of God, knowing "that he who cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." He could not fret or worry, for there was an all-seeing eye that marked the sparrow's fall. He could not envy his richer neighbors, for there is One who is over men and "sets their bounds and



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habitations." He could not hate or be harsh to any man—for what is man to harbor resentment against the evil man, when the Master prayed for His enemies, and His Father will blot out a man's sins and "remember them against him no more forever"?

Oh, the old man was a sermon to me! I wish I could make you see him with his shining face, his grandly simple life, his serenity and cheerful faith. I envied him his beautiful life there among the hills. I envied him his sweet soul. And I envied him his satisfied serenity. I envied him for you, and I envied him for myself. I believe that such victory of life is even possible for us here in the sordid city's struggle. For, after all, our wealth is from within, and the satisfactions of life come from God.

*"My times are in Thy hands':  
My God, I wish them there;  
My life, my friends, my soul, I leave  
Entirely to Thy care.*



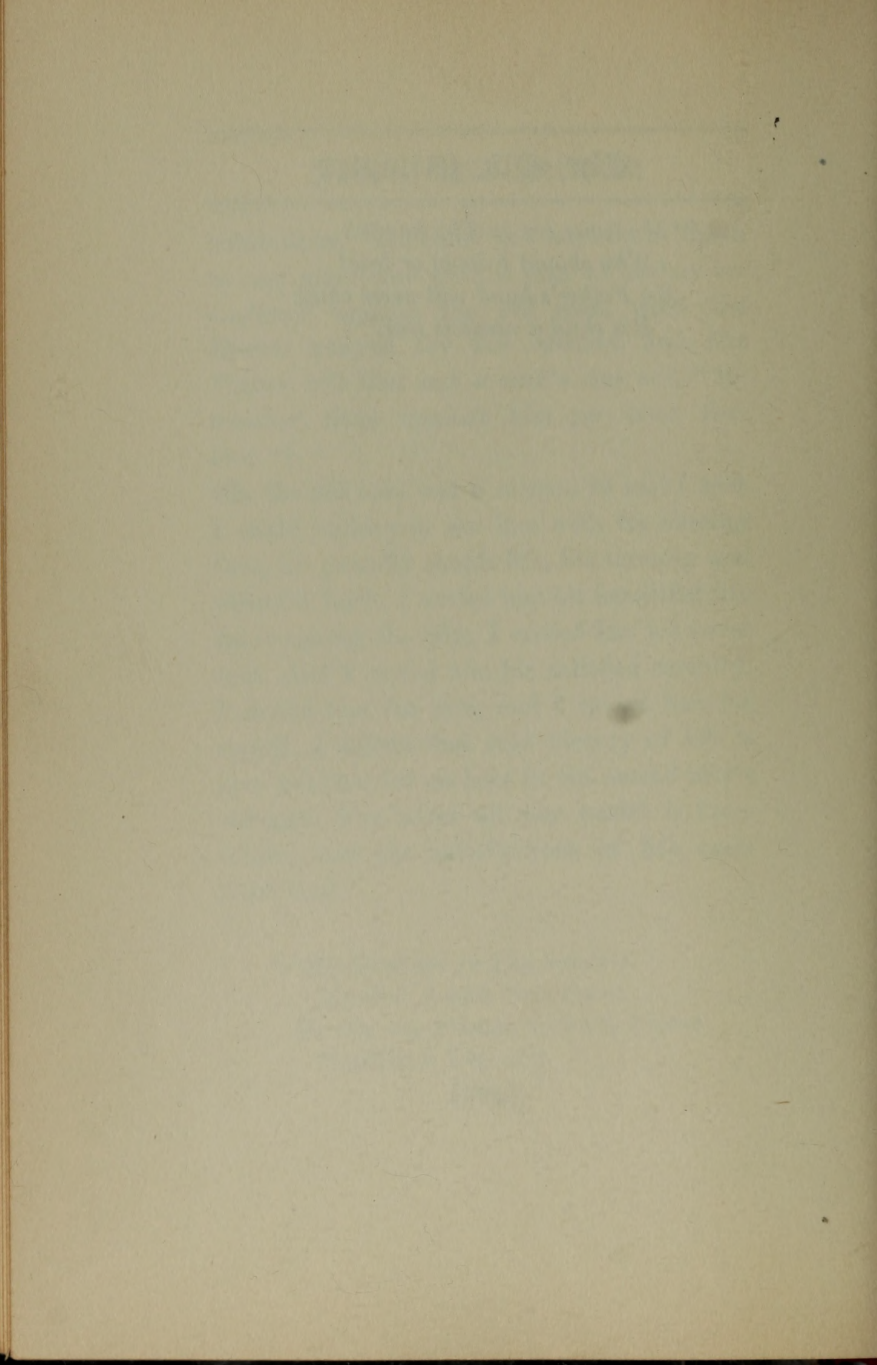
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*“‘My times are in Thy hands’:  
Why should I doubt or fear?  
My Father’s hand will never cause  
His child a needless tear.”*







## The Man of the Fields



Long before the time  
Of which I speak, the Shepherd had been bound  
In surety for his Brother's Son, a man  
Of an industrious life, and ample means,—  
But unforeseen misfortunes suddenly  
Had prest upon him,—and old Michael now  
Was summoned to discharge the forfeiture,  
A grievous penalty, but little less  
Than half his substance.

And thus the old man spake to him:—"My son,  
To-morrow thou wilt leave me: with full heart  
I look upon thee, for thou art the same.  
That wert a promise to me ere thy birth,  
And all thy life hast been my daily joy.  
These fields were burdened when they came to me;  
Till I was forty years of age, not more  
Than half of mine inheritance was mine.  
I toiled and toiled; God blessed me in my work,  
And till these three weeks past the land was free.  
It looks as if it never could endure  
Another master. Heaven forgive me, Luke,  
If I judge ill for thee, but it seems good  
That thou shouldst go."

"Nay, Boy, be of good hope;—we both may live  
To see a better day. At eighty-four  
I still am strong and hale; do thou thy part;  
I will do mine. I will begin again  
With many tasks that were resigned to thee:  
Up to the heights and in among the storms,  
Will I without thee go again, and do  
All works which I was wont to do alone  
Before I knew thy face.—Heaven bless thee, Boy!"

—WORDSWORTH.



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## The Man of the Fields

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IN the Summer time we are as migratory as the birds. For a day, a week, a month we all turn travellers. Old Dr. Johnson thought he attained the *summum bonum* of earthly pleasure in being whirled along a country road in a post-chaise. Evidently he was an automobilist before his time. But, peace to the good doctor, it is not mere movement we crave. Else why the wish for country roads? Else a Ferris wheel, or a merry-go-round would suffice. No, every journey is a pilgrimage. We go to see and we go to worship.

Men who pass great architecture every day, and never see it; men who pass Nathan Hale's statue, morning and evening, and never know it, become observant as soon as they board a vacation train. They note landscape, star, foliage. Men devoid of sentiment will climb



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a mountain for a view. Some, you never suspect of reverence, will stay over a day to visit a ruin or a grave.

Think to what places pilgrimages are organized. Never to Cripple Creek, or Chicago, though they are rich: but to Jamestown, which is deserted; and Nazareth, which is poor. Many more pilgrimages are made to Washington than to New York, though it is an inferior city.

And when the tourist comes to New York or Boston, what does he ask to see? Coney Island, Nantasket Beach, the tallest bank or the Subway? Not at first. He passes those by for Fraunce's Tavern, the Jumel Mansion, old St. Paul's, Faneuil Hall, Lexington Green, and Plymouth Rock.

There are mountains in our own country higher and grander far than anything in the Alps, but if I have money for only one, give me the Alps. Why? It is not a fad for foreign labels on my trunk. It is a deep instinct within us, and a holy one, which craves the scene that is connected with some heroic



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deed of man. That nature pleases us most which is associated with and expresses what Wordsworth called "the sweet, sad music of humanity." It is man who ennobles Nature. Ohio has far richer towns, but none like Concord, since Emerson lived and wrought in it. The country around Ecclefechan is poor and prosy. But to sit in the room where Carlyle was born, to stand by his grave, and know that it is also the land of Burns, makes every stone a shrine, and every flower a poem.

"Are not Arbanah and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? May I not wash in them and be clean?" said Naaman, the Syrian nobleman. No! The Jordan hath the cleansing touch. The Jordan is the sacred river, hallowed by both God and man. Nothing is really a shrine until a man has struggled there. Every spot where the human spirit has struggled, and striven, and suffered, and achieved, is holy ground.

And now we have come upon the deep secret



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the country has for us. Often standing upon a hill, and looking out over the landscape dotted with farms, I have felt the tear-drop start, and the thoughts that lie too deep for words. Here before us lies Paradise. Revelation, patriotism, and sacrifice, with the scenes of their great enactment, are all spread out before us. Here, by unknown heroisms, plain men and women are turning plain houses and fields into sacred shrines. You and I would do ill to come back from our Summer pilgrimage with words only for the hills, and fields, and harvests, forgetful of the heroes whose life struggle hath lent them charm. To me far greater than aught of sea, or land I have seen, is the man who dwells among them.

“The man of the fields”—let us call him.

Some of us have known him from our childhood. We can see him yet, with his stalwart form, big hands, face of tan, high-top, cow-hide boots, broad-brim hat. Not a reed shaken by the wind was he, but a sturdy oak, glorying in wrestle and storm. Clad in “soft rai-



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## The Man of the Fields

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ment"? Not he! He never stayed in a city more than three days at a time, indeed if he has ever seen one. None of his friends "dwell in kings' houses."

Once a year he goes to the county-seat to pay his taxes. Once a week he goes to the village to market. Once a year he has a holiday—in Virginia it is Christmas, in New England it is Thanksgiving. He is a man of one newspaper—the *Weekly Tribune*, or *Weekly American*; one book—he reads the Bible aloud night and morn. The people among whom he lives have given him a new name, because it gives the key to his character. Out West they call him, "Old Moses"—because in the moralities, he, in a lax community, is as uncompromising as the Decalogue. Down South, where most men are slow pay, they call him "Billy Pay-down," because his word is as good as his bond.

He is a man of few words, and they are usually monosyllables. His simple "Yes" is yes, and he will never go back on it; and when he says "No" he means it. He hates a lie,



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## Heroes and Heroism

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howsoever white, and rising for his task a great while before day, and working until dark, he utterly despises idleness. I think his silence gives him the aspect of sternness. And although he has never laid his finger on them, I think his own children are a little afraid of him. Those who build monuments never have thought of him, and bookmakers have never counted his narrow, hard life worth while. I suppose to the city dweller his has seemed the drudgery of a wasted life. But since I have grown up, I have found out the heart of this man, and come upon heroism beyond the price of rubies.

1. The first admirations of the child, like those of the race, are for the fighter. Every race in its childhood has an Iliad. Whether it is Ulysses, or Beowulf, or Israel Putnam, or Davy Crockett, our hearts are thrilled by tales of courage and daring. Indeed the world has given its first prizes to the soldier. There was nothing France could deny to Napoleon. The basal element of all heroism is courage.



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## The Man of the Fields

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I think you will all agree that President Roosevelt ought to know courage when he sees it. It is in his book "Winning of the West" that he picks out the American pioneer as the finest type of courage in all our history. For page after page he goes on to describe the life of the settler and farmer, who has been the father of the State. All his land was shrouded in the beginning by one vast forest. It covered the mountains from the crest to the river, filled the valleys, and stretched in sombre, melancholy, waste on to the West. What lay within it none could tell. "It was the home of the game they followed, the wild beasts that preyed on their flocks, and deep in its tangled depths lurked their red foes, hawk-eyed, and lynx-hearted." Victor Hugo has a celebrated description of a man's fight with the sea. It was a tiny struggle as compared with that of the husbandman with the forests. Every acre he claimed had to be cleared by the axe and held by the rifle. Single-handed and alone, he lived upon the clearings which he hewed out



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of the everlasting forests. It is no wonder he became grim, splendid, deep-hearted, a man of action rather than words.

I think the bravest man that I have ever known was one of these men of the fields.

He was born in an old settled state. His earliest childhood was cradled in the richest valley this side of the Allegheny mountains. Misfortune came when he was twelve, and his father's possessions were swept away. That father, putting his family and his few possessions into a great, four-horse wagon, wended his way, like those who followed Daniel Boone half a century before, across the Blue Ridge.

The cabin had been built, the first corn field cleared, and the first crop of golden corn was ready for the sickle, when the father died. Our lad of twelve was the head of the family. His brother was an invalid, and his three sisters were babies. His mother had a stout heart, and an abiding trust in God, and the boy had a strong arm.

At twelve years of age, with a family of a



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grown man dependent upon him, he began the battle of a pioneer. For him there was no more schooling, save the snowy days of two short Winters. For him there was no holiday, no time for the sports of youth. Early and late he toiled uncomplaining at his task, and when he was thirty and the girls were married, the great war came. All unknown he had built his home in the border country, which was to be the meeting-place of two armies.

It was not civil war as we know it, but it was fratricidal war. It was neighbor against neighbor, and father against child. The brother went away to fight under Stonewall Jackson. As I first remember this man, long after the war was over, he wore a tattered and faded blue army overcoat.

By this time in his home, besides his old mother, there dwelt his sweet young wife, with little children in her arms. I will never forget that the first time I ever saw a picture of a Madonna with a child in her arms, I thought it was a photograph of this man's



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## Heroes and Heroism

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home. Combining foresight and economy with indefatigable toil, the finest worker in the country side, the man who could swing the axe better than any other, and outdistanced every cradler in the wheat field, added to his fields until every side of his home, which was now new, modern, and comfortable, there stretched away the meadow land and the orchards, and the corn fields, until you could scarce get a glimpse of the forest at all. The finest horses filled his stables, and the cattle on the hills, and the sheep, were his also. When I look back upon that scene, and think of the odds against which he battled, and the poverty, and the loneliness, the great forests, the fenceless lands, the stubborn weeds, and the unyielding rocks, and when I think that this man did it in his own strength, and by his own toil, and with his own self-denial, I write down in my mind the word hero, splendid, masterful, with as unfaltering courage, with as stout a heart as any Cæsar's whose praise we have heard, or any knight of Arthur's Table who subdued



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## The Man of the Fields

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the wilderness, and the wild things in it, and wilder men, around the tower of Camelot. You and I were born of a mighty race; and brave men were our sires.

Whenever I hear young men complaining of lack of opportunity, and cowering down, and whining before adversity, and rough circumstances; or whenever I myself am disposed to complain because I have not had the chance of my more fortunate neighbor, I like to recall the story of the courage and achievement of "the man of the fields."

2. Jesus built only two monuments, while He lived upon the earth, and they were both to women. The one was to the woman, who broke the ointment on His head; and the other one was to the poor widow, who threw her mite into the temple treasury. Both were memorials to fidelity.

I am sure that as we grow older, and wiser, we prize fidelity higher than courage.

Up in the Adirondack mountains there is a lonely grave on a lonely farm. The man who sleeps in it was hanged on the banks of the



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## Heroes and Heroism

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Potomac. And yet, as they brought his body to the Adirondack farm, cities received it with homage, and the nation's greatest orator stood by the felon's grave, and pronounced his name which the world will never let die—the name of John Brown.

I do not altogether admire John Brown. I utterly disapprove of what he did at Harper's Ferry. He had to be hanged for it. I think the kindest thing we may say, is that John Brown in those days was a crazy man. What he did was insurrection and anarchy.

And yet there was that about John Brown which the world will never forget. He was a Connecticut teacher and then an Adirondack farmer. From his earliest youth he had a passion for freedom. He hated slavery, when it was apologized for even in New England. While other men spent their lives in acquiring property, he spent his days in brooding over the great crime of human bondage. Other men prepared their sons for college, for business, for careers. With the Bible in his hand, and a prayer on his lips, he incul-



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## The Man of the fields

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cated his own passion for justice into the hearts of his growing boys, and made them ready to be crusaders for freedom.

He put those rifles in their hands, which Plymouth Church had sent to Kansas marked as Beecher's Bibles, and helped to fight the battle that turned back the hordes from Missouri and made Kansas forever free. Then he took those boys, and went to Virginia, and, on the heights of the Potomac, raised the flag of emancipation, and justly came to his death. They hung him on a gibbet. But the fidelity of this ignorant, and fanatical, old man of the fields to his great dream of the enfranchisement of man, they could not hang, nor strangle, nor kill. It became a beacon that illuminated the conscience of the nation, and though it took a war to do it, wiped human slavery out of American history. John Brown's faithfulness to the highest truth he knew makes John Brown a hero in spite of his crimes.

When John Watson astounded the world with his revelations of heroism found in the



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## Heroes and Heroism

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school teacher, and the post-man, and the farmer-woman, of a little Scottish glen, he also published to the world the marvellous fidelity of the farmer man, called Drum-sheugh.

Neither wife nor child had he, but only lands, and houses, and gold. In that little glen, as in all the world to-day, people had no word of praise for the richest man. He was called "miser," "close-fisted," "skin-flint." Secretly he had obeyed the injunction of the Master, "Let not thy right hand know what thy left hand doeth." Nobody, save those who knew, suspected the romance of his life, and the depths of his tender, generous heart.

It was the school teacher, who could have told you how many lads had their chance of college, because he had opened his purse strings.

It was the Dominie, who could have told you how the poor had their turkey at Christmas time and the poor widow wood for the winter, because every year he had made provision.



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## The Man of the Fields

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It was the country doctor, who could have told you who paid the bill for the surgeon who saved the poor wood-chopper's wife from death, who had sent away the widow's eldest daughter to a sunnier clime, that she might escape from the clutches of consumption.

There was a woman in that town, who could have told you why always his home had been desolate of woman's smiles and woman's tears. For all through the years, she had carried the love tale he had told her, locked up in her true woman's heart.

The friend who stood by his deathbed, and heard him review his life before the Eye that never slumbers nor sleeps, heard him tell the secret of it.

It was faithfulness.

That old love for the woman, whose companionship he might never have, but which had burned like a lamp before the altars of God, that goes out neither day nor night, through all the years, kept him sweet, and kind, and generous, and true. Fidelity it was that made a hero out of this plain man of the fields.



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## Heroes and Heroism

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I too have come upon that fidelity, though there was no romance, but only tragedy in it. The man of the fields, whose story I am trying to tell, came to a time when he was on the edge of victory over his poverty. At last his long struggle had its reward and he was in sight, not of affluence, but comfort. Then the storm broke, of the kind that tries men's souls.

When he was much younger, he had been prevailed upon to enter into a business relation with a near kinsman. The kinsman drew a paper, which was in reality one-sided. This man unsuspectingly signed it. They were perfectly happy in the business relation. The kinsman came even into the man's home, and received all the respect due a father.

The man long ago had fulfilled his obligations outlined in the paper. The kinsman said so, and declared the old contract destroyed. Then, in an evil hour, bitterness sprang up, and the kinsman brought forth the old contract, demanding his pound of flesh. To pay it would sweep away half of all



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## The Man of the Fields

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that this man had, and besides the paper was outlawed. Not only so, this man saw that paper left for a day forgotten in an empty house. One touch of the candle and there would be no earthly record to show anything about the uncertain obligation of the past. But that man said, "Though it be unjust and over reaching; though to perform it will take away half that I possess, and strike down the opportunity of my children; and though there is no court in the world that will compel this payment, yet no paper of mine has ever gone to protest, and I will pay it."

He prepared to move out of his home, giving up one half of his farm, and building a little house on the other and wild end of it. But it never had to be. It may be that God does not know, or care, and that Providence taketh no thought of her own, for many there are, who have said it. But this I know, in the very hour of that man's sacrifice for honor, a deep excitement swept over the country. Under all that land were discovered



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deep coal beds, and this man had not only enough to pay off the unjust claim, but was ten times richer than ever before. And so it is that truth is stronger than fiction. So it is that some of us feel that the great God is not unmindful of His own. So it is that when I read revelations of high finance, and see the ways in which men make haste to get rich, and build their castles with the money they have taken from the poor, and in the walls of them, along with the stones, go the hay and stubble of dishonesty and broken promises, I turn back and find my heart growing secure in its faith in human nature, and in human faithfulness, as I remember this plain man of the fields.

3. There is a higher test of manhood than either courage or fidelity; or, if it is not higher, it is finer. I mean now to speak of self-sacrifice. Courage, and fidelity even, may be for one's own welfare or gain. But self-sacrifice brings no gain. It is pure altruism.

So motherhood will be perpetually canonized.



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## The Man of the Fields

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Jesus will never be surpassed because He gave His life a ransom for many.

The martyrs will never be uncrowned.

The finest self-sacrifice the world has seen has been witnessed among the folk who live all their lives on the farm. Daniel Webster to the end of his days counted his father, never heard of save in his sons, the finest gentleman he had ever known. We know what he meant when we hear the story of his drudgery for his children's sake in the New Hampshire farm.

I have seen heroisms like it on prairie and hillside. Judea has not all the sacred places, and New England has not all the shrines. I learned of one in a corn field. I knew the place and the people.

At the end of the long rows of breast high corn, under a shade tree, just out of the July sun, sat a man and a boy. The man was just on the edge of age, and the boy was on the verge of manhood. There had just gone away from them the minister and another man, who was a scholar. They had talked



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of books, and the great world, in English that was pure and undefiled. Both the man and the boy felt as if they had seen a vision. After a silence which neither seemed anxious to break, the boy said, "Father, is anything so great as learning? Do you suppose I can ever go to college?" The man was silent a long time, and then he said, "Your mother and I have often talked of it and tried to plan it. We so sorely need you on the farm, and it is only by going into debt that we can get the money. I would have given half of my life to be a scholar, but I never had the chance even of a common schooling. My dream has been that maybe I could live that life in you, and we will deny ourselves anything to give you a chance."

The boy was too intoxicated then with his dream to realize the price with which his chance was purchased. When he went away in the Autumn, gladness smiled through his tears of parting. Only the father and mother knew that this was the boy's going from home forever. As they turned back to a



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new burden and a heavier load, with nevermore now any chance of respite, they knew they had lost him, that his home-coming would be less and less regular, and only for a visit, and that in spite of himself he would outgrow them and their narrow lives. It was cruel as Golgotha. But it was sweet too, for they were glad to decrease that John might increase.

I do not believe that they knew their deed was sublime, and after all the long years of isolation and loneliness they have never dreamed that what they were doing was heroic. But God knows it, and has He not promised that they who so glorify Him among men are marked and glorified by His own angels?

Some day that son of theirs, when he has children of his own, will see how splendid and heroic were they who kept his cradle. I think it will gird him with noble self-effacement, and his parents' sacrifice will not be for naught.

So our fathers have given pledge for us.



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I think too, some day they who write books and sing poems will have their eyes opened to the nobleness that lives at our doors among the common folk, and will tell it out to the generations, what God already knows, that no one of the sons of men has shown a finer heroism than "the man of the fields."

4. "From scenes like this old Scotia's grandeur springs," sang Robert Burns, describing the humble home life of a man of the fields. "The farmers make up the backbone of our country," says the sociologist. "Our great men come from the farm," says the historian of the American city. And for proof he points to the college president, the captain of industry, the financier, the editor, the minister, and the judge. Most of the leaders have come straight up from the farm. Despite rustic manners, poverty, and early educational handicaps, in the race of city life they generally outstrip the man to the manor born. Why? The farm furnishes more captains for the armies of success, also, than do the shops. Why? Fresh air, the out-of-



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doors, early hours, simple and wholesome food, the independence of the farmer, the self-reliance, the initiative and invention, which are necessities thrust upon him by his isolated struggle, all these doubtless have much to do with his primacy.

Another reason is that his life lies in what Horace calls the golden mean. He knows neither extreme penury nor extreme prosperity. Farmers are neither millionaires nor paupers. The rich farmer is only well-to-do, and his income cannot relieve him from industry. The more his acres the more is his care. Wealth with him is always stewardship, and not prodigality. Nor is his poverty ever the penury that brutalizes. You do not find pauperism in the country. After all it is the farmer's boy who has a better chance than either the child of the boulevard or the slums.

Another reason is his blood.

The American farmer traces his pedigree back to Plymouth. The one I am writing about can go back with never a break to



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Jamestown in the days of the Puritan Commonwealth. Yea, if he has a mind to cross the sea, he can trace his forbears back to the days of the Black Prince, and maybe back to the Saxons in the days of Harold. And blood will tell—in cattle, in horses, and in men. Gentle, if not noble blood, in the humble guise of the toiler, has ever been the patent of great character. It was at Nazareth. It was at Huntington. It was at Mount Vernon, and on the Sangamon. It has been so on the American farm.

But the deepest reason lies in this—whether he knows it or not, the man of the fields is of necessity an idealist.

Daily he walks by the things which are not seen. He sows faith, whether he reaps wheat or corn.

His children are brought up on ideals. The short term schooling, with the glimpse of books and scholarship, tells them of a world they have never seen, and begets in them dreams. Their idea of a city is a dream of palaces, culture, sights, and wonders. It is



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all idealized. They catch a glimpse of a lawyer, or an editor, or a banker, and see his fine house, his better clothes, his uncalled hands, his ample supply of money. He is like a prince in a fairy-story. They look on college as an enchanted world, and enter it to wring from it ampler power, and intend to go out of it to conquer. A scholar seems to them more than human. They may be naïve about these unfamiliar worlds, but they are never *blasé*. They are fresh, and childlike, and they dream dreams.

Religion, to the man of the fields, is always idealism. He does not dream of associating the church with respectability, or social advantage, or mere charity. To him the church is the challenge of the Infinite; the minister is a scholar; Sunday is an unusual day; and the religious life is his answer to the call of God.

It was so with my man of the fields and his household. I shall never forget how he became a churchman. I heard his son tell about it long afterwards:



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“My father was like the New Testament young ruler,” he said. “From his youth up he had kept the Commandments, and stood for rocklike integrity, and the virtues that make a man among those of the country side. But mother had to coax him to go to church. At grandfather’s we used to have family prayers. I wondered why we did not have them at our house. And then I remember a certain Sunday morning. Before he sat down to breakfast, he called mother and us children together in a room. He was always a man of few words, and he did not speak many now, but he always meant what he said. And he said, ‘This morning, as I went to my chores, I felt a great impulse to dedicate my life to Jesus Christ. And,’ he said, turning to my mother, ‘Molly, turn over into the New Testament where it tells about the young ruler, and if you can find the place, read it.’ My mother was very much moved, and we children had the sense that there was something mysterious and mighty in the air.

“My mother opened the New Testament



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and found that chapter in Luke, and read through her tears that account of the rich ruler. And when she stopped there was silence for a moment, and then father and mother knelt down, and we all knelt down. Then there was silence again, and mother thought that she ought to pray, and I remember that she said the Lord's Prayer. When she was done, my father took it up, and, though his lips were untrained to public prayer, he made a simple, heart-felt petition and consecration that had for its meaning to us children, 'I have chosen this day whom I will serve. As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.' And I remember that morning when we went to church, when the sermon was done, and the minister was about to give out the last hymn, he said, 'Is there any one here who would like to unite with the church?' And my father went up and gave him his name. And I want to tell you that it made a difference with all of our lives. My father was not any more honest, nor any more true, nor any more just, but I do think that he was



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more kind, and I know that in our home we knew more of the religious world. We knew more about the ministers. We knew more about the Bible, because every morning and night it was read. And we all learned to pray. And that was one of the things that altogether unconsciously moved my heart, and has shaped, and will shape my life."

So his son told the story. He was a minister. Hearing it, you and I do not need to wonder why so many men in the ministry come from the farm folk. The people of the fields are before all idealists. Theirs is a life of plain living and high thinking. And ideals, after all, are motives that stir the soul, as winds sweep the sea. Ideals are the springs of action. Ideals are the bread on which heroisms feed.

Are some of us descended from men and women of the farm? Was our own childhood passed amid the fields? Are we sufficiently proud of our ancestry, and are we indeed worthy of it?

We have been bought with a price. For my



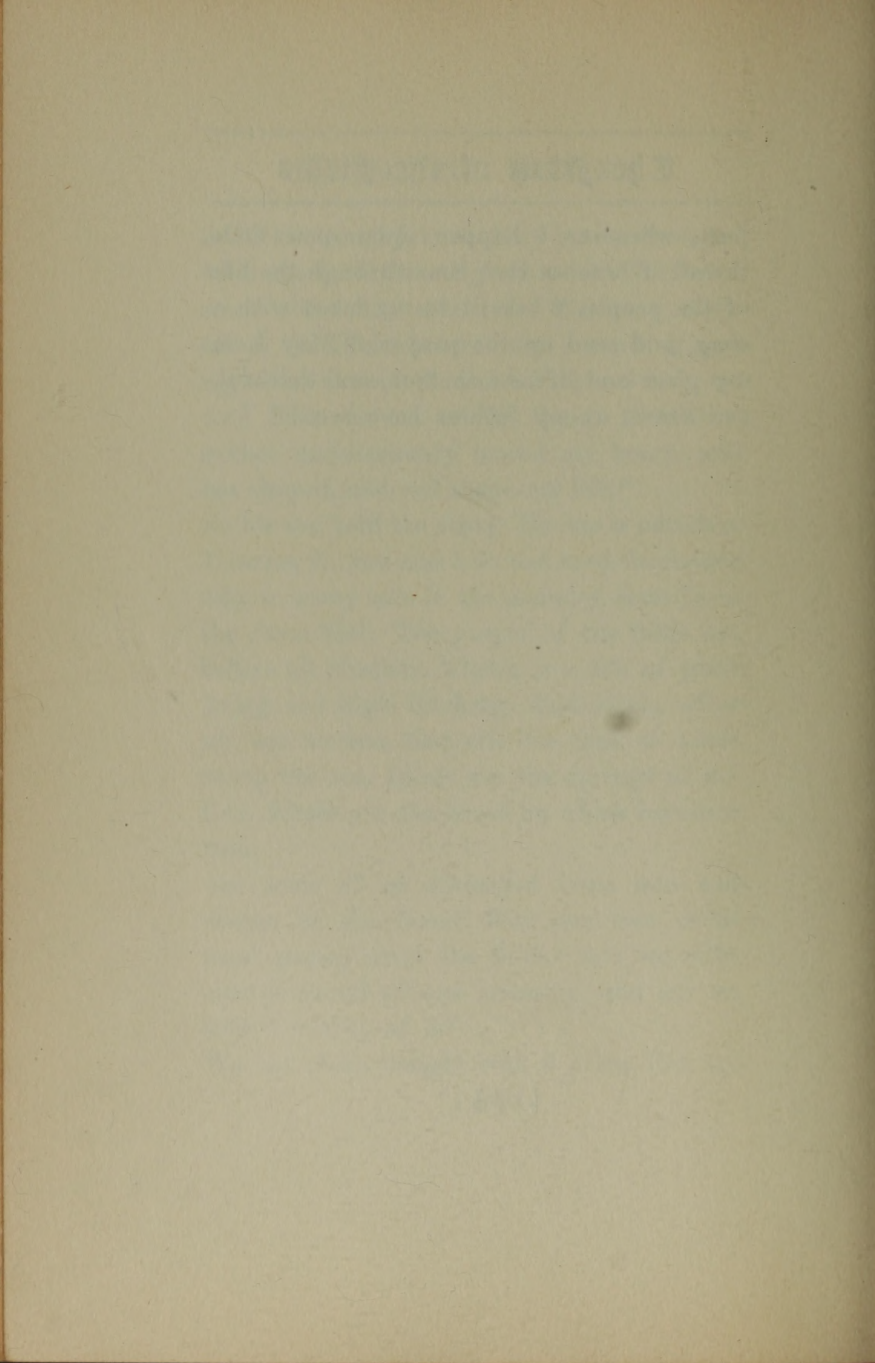
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part, whenever I happen upon some little thread of heroism that runs through the life of the people, I take it to my heart with a song, and send up the prayer, "May I, in my place and life, be as true, and faithful, and brave, as my fathers have been!"







A Garden of Old-fashioned  
flowers



*"She was a Phantom of delight  
When first she gleamed upon my sight;  
A lovely Apparition, sent  
To be a moment's ornament;  
Her eyes as stars of Twilight fair;  
Like Twilight's, too, her dusky hair;  
But all things else about her drawn  
From May-time and the cheerful Dawn;  
A dancing Shape, an Image gay,  
To haunt, to startle, and waylay.*

*"I saw, upon a nearer view,  
A Spirit, yet a Woman too!  
Her household motions light and free,  
And steps of virgin liberty;  
A countenance in which did meet  
Sweet records, promises as sweet;  
A Creature not too bright or good  
For human nature's daily food;  
For transient sorrows, simple wiles,  
Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears, and smiles.*

*"And now I see with eye serene  
The very pulse of the machine;  
A Being breathing thoughtful breath,  
A Traveller between life and death;  
The reason firm, the temperate will,  
Endurance, foresight, strength, and skill;  
A perfect Woman, nobly planned,  
To warn, to comfort, and command;  
And yet a spirit still, and bright  
With something of an angel light."*

—WORDSWORTH.



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## A Garden of Old-fashioned Flowers

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REMEMBER it as a child. It is one of the first things I can remember. It is a matter of common wonder to people, when they recall their childhood, that the first memories are what they are. I do not mean now the first sight of a city, or the first day at school, or one's first sweetheart. We were five or six years old then, and were little men and women.

But, I mean those memories before we can remember—those first, dim, divine, traditions, or myths of the soul, while it is yet in the preconscious period, before the *Ego* has learned to write history.

I mean when we were only two and a half or three years old. We do not recall the things the grown-ups counted important of all.

We remember the final catastrophe of a one-



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armed doll, or the morocco tips of a pair of shoes, or a turtle in the road by the brook, or the buttons on a maid's coat.

That is how I remember the garden of flowers.

I do not remember the flowers, save that there was a sea of them, and the honey-bees were flying about, and the fragrance I distinctly recall.

I remember the paths were edged with boards, sunken in the ground, and held fast with pegs, which I ever struggled to pull out. There was one great, flat stone, which was so warm, that I shunned it for fear of being burned.

There was a little child in the garden, though I do not remember him very well.

But what I do remember, first and clearest of all, is the lady whom I saw, and loved, in that garden of old-fashioned flowers.

She had the waviest and blackest of hair, combed low on her forehead. Her great brown eyes were full of fire and tenderness; her lips were made for smiling. She was little, and



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## Old-fashioned flowers

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plump, and lithesome. I thought her very beautiful. She could not have been more than a girl.

Her home was an old, rambling, weather-beaten house. But she lived in the garden, whose flowers she loved, and which she kept with her own hands. She always seemed to be either at work with the flowers there, or at play with the child.

Life for her was not all smiles, as I thought. In later years I learned how very serious life was for this woman of the flower garden. After all, the flower garden hours were her recreation and idle hours. There in the sunshine it was mostly laughter and play.

The cares of a housewife on a big farm were hers, and she was but twenty. Often her work was menial. Literally she practiced the old-fashioned virtues of Solomon's good woman.

"She seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands.

"She girdeth her loins with strength, and strengtheneth her arms."



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But, named for Mary of Nazareth, like her, her heart was in the cradle.

The boy was the first baby. When the baby cried, the girl mother cried; when he laughed, she was happy. When she looked into his eyes she wondered, and when he slept she sometimes trembled as she thought of her grave responsibility, or how he might be taken away. Often and often she prayed. But what did she pray? I may not tell, for I do not know. Nobody in the universe, except God and the angels, may ever know all the hopes of a mother's prayer.

But this much I know. Her heart ached as she thought of his future, and what kind of a man he would grow up to be. Like Jacob of old she wrestled with the Holy One, and grew very intimate with God. Together the heavenly Father and the earthly mother made plans for the unconscious child.

All that she hoped will probably never be fulfilled. And yet I tell you, no man can ever have for himself a nobler task, or a holier hope, than to fulfil his mother's prayer. Even



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## Old-fashioned flowers

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as man can have no higher joy, or receive any garland one half so fair, as his own mother's praise.

Of course I knew nothing of these things until years after. But that memory of the woman and the child floats over my childhood like a golden cloud. I always think of her in the fragrant garden, at the mere mention of the words—old-fashioned flowers.

I remember it well another day.

It was a rainy day. It was not wet rain, so much as soft, May rain. I went there to play. I could not find either the woman or the child.

The child was there, but he was not a child. He had grown up in a day, and was crying and saying to himself, "O God! O mother!" for they had told them she would die.

The sky was sobbing too, and the old-fashioned flowers were all in tears.

That was the first time I ever knew the child's father. I had seen his face always. It was a little stern. But that day, when he came bringing the child from the sick-room



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into the garden, I knew him for a tender heart. I did not dare, but I wanted to put my arms about his neck and tell him that I too loved him.

The child, little by little, made me aware of what had passed by the sick bed. I heard the grown-ups speak of it too, with bated breath.

The man was in tears and all trembling. The woman alone was serene. She spoke in a low tone which in itself was a caress. She spoke of the past gratefully; of the present proudly; of the future hopefully. Her words sounded like a Psalm. At the end she asked and was given two pledges—that when she was asleep they would surround her grave with old-fashioned flowers; and that no matter what might befall, the child should have the chance to be a scholar. “Farm or no farm,” is the way they said she put it, “promise me the boy shall go to college.”

While the man and child, fresh from that sacred interview, were giving reins to their grief there among the flowers she loved so



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## Old-fashioned Flowers

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well, a motherly, neighbor woman came out and said, " Maybe God has heard our prayers. Anyhow, for the first time in a week, she has fallen into a restful sleep. The doctor says, ' It looks like hope.' " Even as I watched the change on the face of the man, the sun shot one ray through the clouds, and the flowers, wiping their eyes, began to lift up their heads.

After that, for many years I was familiar with that garden.

The woman, restored to health, grew rapidly older with her many cares. Other children came. I had for playmates the two sisters of the boy.

We all learned from the woman to love and name the flowers.

Like old friends they still are to me. No devotee ever counts the beads of her rosary more reverently than I recall their names.

Daffodils came first in the Spring within the garden, as did dandelions, hepaticas, and violets, in the fields without. There were the cherry and apple blossoms that told us Nat-



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ure was a bride and had all of a bride's love-sick ways. Then the roses came—roses great and small, roses pink, and red, and white—and honeysuckle, and sweet williams. There were the four-o'clocks that set the garden on fire by day, and then there were the fireflies at night. There were mignonette, forget-me-nots, sweet alyssum, marigolds, larkspur, ragged robins, pinks, phlox, violets, shrubs, petunias, tiger lilies, dahlias, and sunflowers. You see, I knew the old-fashioned flowers by their old-fashioned names. Since then I have seen what florists call old-fashioned gardens in city parks. Maybe the flowers are the same that we used to love as children, but in their city surroundings and with their new-fangled Latin names, I do not know them or love them. It is like turning Maud Muller into a lady-in-waiting. The fine clothes of the court do not belong to her; and in the "white light that beats on a throne," she has lost her country beauty.

I feel sorry for those old-fashioned flowers in the city. I imagine they feel like wild birds



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## Old-fashioned Flowers

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in captivity. They look like furniture, guaranteed to be real antique, but which was lately made in Houston Street.

But in that garden each one had more than a royal beauty. To the city bred I can never make known its charm, or the dominion it still holds over my heart. I see it in Wordsworth's line, "Heaven lies about us in our infancy."

I have gone there in later years and found it changed, but I remember it only as it was then.

On entering its magic domain, I am a child again. A boy's game or boy's plan, or boy's joy fills my heart. I find myself waiting for the boy and girls to come, who never come.

When the stars come out, I wait for the romp or the story. If it is Sunday, I expect a woman to read to us from the sacred book, and closing it, to set our hearts on fire with noble ambitions by tales of what great men have wrought.

The birds are still there, the same birds, I am sure, for they sing the old songs.

The flowers are the same flowers, only they



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are more reserved, and seem to say, Oh, what a story we might tell!" It is the people who are gone. I hear the same names; but the faces are different. The boy and the girls are gone.

One of the unforgettable days was the last time that we spent in the garden, before it changed so.

It was a Sunday in the long ago. The girls and I were very quiet, for, on the morrow, the boy was leaving home for college.

All day long, we had been obtrusively lighthearted, for we were trying to forget the solemnity that the evening would bring.

We looked at the boy's little trunk, all packed by the woman's hands, with his scanty wardrobe.

We all put in something which we loved. But it was richer than we knew. The boy afterwards told me that he found in it three letters from the woman, and in each one there was love, and tears, and money. Besides, every article in it was wrapped in a mother's prayer.



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That night we saw the Bible his mother had given him. His mother's love was written on the first leaf; and her hopes for him, where it always fell open of itself.

Family prayers were very imperfect that night. The man tried to read the ninety-first Psalm, but he stumbled and said he could not see. When he knelt down, he tried to pray, but his voice broke, and our prayers were silent.

Then the woman and the boy went out into the garden. What was said there may not be told. It was speech without words.

The flowers knew. When the twain returned, their shoes were wet. "The dew is falling," the woman said. I knew it, for one could see it on her face.

The garden was never the same again, save once, and that was years after, when the boy brought his bride home. Its glory has faded. It has a more subdued charm. The house and the hills are shrunken. I saw that to the woman it had changed; and I was sure that the old fields had lost their charm for the man. Both



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of them seemed restless, like birds in autumn, who think of a new country.

The last time I went there they had a family reunion.

The old circle was complete again, and more, for the returning children brought children. It was a gay week. But I observed that when the old people were gladdest they unconsciously called the children of to-day by the child names of long ago. And sometimes in the midst of laughter there were tears in their eyes.

It was on the porch which faced the flower garden, that the children sat, and talked, long after both old people and the little ones were in bed.

They talked of the old days until they were silent. Then, in lower tones, they spoke of the present with its separations, and ever nearer-drawing Mystery.

Gratefully they spoke of the chance in life which was theirs, purchased at a price.

They began to regret the hardship, the iso-



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## Old-fashioned flowers

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lation, the drudgery of those who had literally laid down their lives for them.

“What a tragedy mother’s life has been,” said one. “She was born here, she was married here, she has been a slave here. Until she was old she never saw a city, nor had a silk dress. How she toiled and contrived, and sewed and planned, and waited and prayed. What a life of loneliness and sacrifice! She was strong and splendid. If she had only had a chance! It seems a cruel tragedy.”

When he ceased, there was no sound but of sobbing. Yes, there was. It came from the garden and was so gentle, it might have come from the flowers. Then she, whom we had thought asleep, came with her wistful, transfigured face. In the moonlight there, that old, faded face, with its great renunciation shining on it, was more beautiful than it used to be in the long ago.

“Listen my children,” she said: “It is not as you think. I have not slept to-night, but it is for gladness and not sorrow. I am never lonely any more. Joy and I are companions.



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## Heroes and Heroism

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God has been good and called me to a high honor. I would not trade my obscure lot for a queen's. My children," and she called them by name, "are all that I prayed. They have all turned out well. I count my life a high honor. God has been good to me. When you are old, and see your children's children about you, you will comprehend my gratitude to-night."

Stooping to kiss each one, she went into the house. When she was gone it was darker. Some one said, "The moon is waning." But strong as the breath of the sea, everywhere, was the fragrance of old-fashioned flowers.

Is it strange, then, that like music to my heart is the mere mention of old-fashioned flowers? It is of virtues they remind me, more than of colors or fragrance. Indeed, when I try to tell about the noble heroisms of womanhood, as achieved by our mothers of long ago, I can think of no better phrase, and I find myself describing their sweet, simple hearts with the word—"a garden of old-fashioned flowers."



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## Old-fashioned Flowers

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Tennyson has given us lovely women—Elaine, Eleanor, Enid, Mariana, and Guinevere, and they are beautifully named.

Longfellow gave us Evangeline, and that one face was enough to have brought him fame.

Browning shows us Pippa, with her gladness and her singing, which, like a holy ministry, makes the world better, and our souls are warmed as by old wine.

Shakespeare is supreme here, as in all else. Who, having met, will ever forget Julia, Katharine, Perdita, Imogen, Portia, Rosalind, and Desdemona?

John Ruskin has made a study of women in literature. Of Shakespeare he finds three things to be true.

The first one is: "Shakespeare has no heroes, only heroines!"

The second fact is: "In every play the calamity hinges on some man's failure: it is the men who fall and fail!"

The third fact is: "In every single play the redemption comes, where there is any re-



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demption, through the heroism and strength of some woman!"

Of Ruskin's first finding—that Shakespeare who "holds the mirror up to Nature," has no heroes, only heroines, I will not speak. I think Ruskin lays it on a little thick in that statement; but perhaps the "Lords of Creation" need it.

But the other two statements interest us—"The failure of any play hinges on a man: and the redemption, if there be any, hinges on a woman."

Certainly, King Lear played the fool, and Cordelia saved him.

In "Hamlet" there was no redemption, because Ophelia was a weakling. If Ophelia had been strong, Hamlet had been saved.

Othello falls into a snare, Desdemona shines like a star.

The men are all weak in the "Merchant of Venice," save Shylock. Portia is the chief figure. Yes, men bring their moral calamities upon themselves, and redemption, if it comes, comes through some good woman. In moral



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things women are stronger than men. That is Shakespeare: and it is history.

Woman—this is what Shakespeare would teach—finds her life in the guiding of men, who guide events.

He goes to war; she at home makes his fire-side worth battling for.

He wins the bread; she at home uses it and makes it go far.

He is the “house-band,” building the walls and providing for the home; she takes the house and by her presence turns it into a home.

*“Don’t talk to me of Olympus maids,  
    ‘Divinely tall or fair,’  
Of Cleopatra’s imperial form,  
    Of Juno’s stately air.  
Those mighty dames, with redoubted names,  
    May erst have held their sway;  
’Tis the little woman—bless her heart!  
    Who rules the world to-day.*

*“’Tis the hand as soft as the nestling bird  
    That grips the grip of steel;*



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*'Tis the voice as low as the summer wind  
That rules without appeal;  
And the warrior, scholar, saint, and sage  
May fight and plan each day.  
The world will wag to the end of time  
In the little woman's way.'*

The strength of woman lies in her heart. Ruth gives us two illustrations of this truth—she clung to Naomi and she clung to Naomi's religion. In her mother-in-law she felt love and in the Jewish religion she felt truth. Self-interest would make her stay in Moab, where her kinsfolk were. There, as Naomi said again and again, were other young men waiting to serve her.

But her affections and her conscience were concerned. Her heart cried out for Naomi and, in her widowhood, she dumbly felt the need of Naomi's religion.

Woman is naturally religious. A man may forget God and still find his way. But rarely a woman. To live without faith, is for her to sail on the sea without the North Star.

Men may live without love. Not so women.



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Without love, like flowers without the sun, they wither and die. The power of woman lies in her heart.

Some have heard this and resented it. It is because they took a superficial view of life. It is a sign of highest strength. To be ruled by the heart is to be the noblest soul. The affections are at the top of the scale. "Out of the heart are the issues of life," says the Scripture. Yes, for men, and angels, and God, but for nothing that is lower. For the savage—out of the strong arm are the issues of life. For the semi-civilized man—out of the brain are the issues of life. But as man becomes like God, refined, cultured, spiritual, divine, holy, noble—out of the heart are the issues of life.

This fact is sure sign of woman's divinity. Tennyson in his "Princess," has given us the tragedy of woman ignoring her heart for her brain.

There is no such perfect picture in literature of the strong-minded woman, and her certain coming to grief.



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The Princess is the emancipated woman. She and her followers found a college by women, for women. No man shall ever cross its boundaries. They will all live and die maids, giving themselves to letters, and government, and philosophy. Like men they strut and swagger, till a little child strays into the grounds of the college, and the noblest part of their frozen natures is quickened. Furtively, as if it were a shame, the Princess caresses the babe, and the fountain of her tears is broken up, and she hungers for affection.

Two men, kinsmen, penetrate within the grounds, only to be arrested, and put on trial for their lives for invading the sacred precincts. In the hour of harsh condemnation and war, the heart asserts itself in the breast of these women, steeling themselves for cruelty, and love claims its own.

Woman is fine, sensitive, gentle, noble, high, pure, with deep capacity for love. In self-denial and love lies her strength.

Her body is more graceful than man's and



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more fair; her brain is as subtle and as strong; but in both these fields man hath the more force and endurance, and must always command.

But love is woman's throne, and from it she rules the world. In the halls of the affections she is queen, and men hasten to obey. Woman's power lies in her heart.

The lowly work of the woman in her home was worth while. She was not wasting her life. Woman's work lies in the home. Her fineness is too precious to be wasted in shop or office. The traveller in the Old World cries out continually against what he sees in every field—women harnessed to drays with dogs, and, like the beast, toiling in the fields.

But what better are we? Our factories are full of them, and our offices. It is no more fitting for our women to work in factories or offices than it is for the women of Switzerland to toss the hay in the fields.

They are compelled to work there for bread. Wages are so low that the husband cannot



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earn enough for his family. The wife too must hire out.

In our country the wages are so small, that in many places a man cannot keep the wolf from the door with his own hands. Women must work, and children must work.

The day will come when this will not be so. A living wage is this, authorities say, for a minimum—"a wage sufficient for one honest, industrious man to feed, and clothe, and educate a family of five. There is something wrong with a civilization that has not a place in its homes for a wife and three children."

I am glad that in our day, as never before, the woman worker has come to a place of honor. It is to our credit that so many fields are open to our sisters.

More wonderful still is the fact that women are more faithful in their work than men.

There are no women defaulters. Women are as true in the office as by the hearthstone.

Industrial opportunity has brought her freedom. No more do our women need to marry for a home. They are independent. I do not



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believe there is a higher achievement of our age than to see the great army of young women going to their daily tasks. They have lost no modesty: they have a new dignity—the dignity that independence gives, and an added breadth. Hereafter, our young men can get wives only by being worthy of strong, pure, high-minded, well-educated young women. The old ages worried over the question of how women should be companions of their husbands. Our puzzle is, how shall our young men be fit companions and consorts of our splendid young womanhood.

I glory in the worth, the independence and the industrial liberty of our womanhood. May it grow from more to more!

And yet, we have not reached the goal. This is not the highest civilization. When the millennium comes, women will not have to work at bread winning. "Life is more than meat."

I covet the day when every man can, of himself, and alone, earn the bread and build the house, and every woman can build the home and reign in it. The true unit of society is



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not the individual. The real unit of society is the family. I wish we had more homes among the people, and that young men and women could begin them earlier. Too many young men marry too late; and too many young women marry never. Man was intended to be a bread-winner, a house-band. Woman was meant to be a home-maker and a household queen.

As John Ruskin says, "And wherever a true wife comes, this home is always about her. The stars only may be over her head; the glow-worm in the night-cold grass may be the only fire at her foot; but home is yet wherever she is; and for a noble woman it stretches far around her, better than ceiled with cedar, or painted with vermillion, shedding its quiet light far for those who else were homeless." And "This is the true nature of home—it is the place of peace; the shelter, not only from all injury, but from all terror, doubt, and division. In so far as it is not this, it is not home; so far as the anxieties of the outer life penetrate into it, and



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the inconsistently-minded, unknown, unloved, or hostile society of the outer world is allowed by either husband or wife to cross the threshold, it ceases to be home. It is then only a part of that outer world which you have roofed over, and lighted a fire in. But so far as it is a sacred place, a temple of the hearth watched over by the household gods, before whose face none may come but those whom they can receive with love,—so far as it is this, and roof and fire are typed only of a nobler shade and light,—shade as of the rock in a weary land, and light as of the Pharos in the stormy sea,—so far it vindicates the name, and fulfils the praise of home.”

Woman’s crown is motherhood. That was the word the woman spoke in the garden.

Women are clamoring for a career.

It seems to me Ruth had a career. To have been the forerunner of Jesus is enough honor for John the Baptist: to have been His disciple is immortality for Peter. How infinitely greater is the honor of Mary, who



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bore Him, and of Ruth, who was his ancestress.

I cannot understand this contempt women have for motherhood and its lowly service, and their craving for notoriety, and club fame, and newspaper sensation. All these, won by heart burning and sorrow, are but clay, and iron, and brass after all. But the rewards of the nursery and home are of pure gold.

Socrates could have been a great sculptor and won immortal fame, like Angelo, with his chisel. He said marble was too cold and fame was too cheap. He preferred flesh and blood, which was warm, and better expressed the soul, and instead of fame he chose love. So he left off sculpture for school teaching. The ages have proven him wise. For tinsel he chose gold.

The honor of woman is motherhood.

I go into the great galleries where men have hung their pictures. Some of them have been like shining visions through all the centuries. Here we have pictures of war and peace, of wealth and poverty, of courage and tragedy,



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of love and hate. As I go around the walls of the great galleries, every now and again, I come to a place where the marble is all worn by the tread of many feet. The multitudes have stood there. The multitudes are standing there. Men and women, who do not know the language of art, are touched by the mystery of the pictures that hang in these places, and they stand before them as before sacred shrines.

Invariably it is a woman's face the artist has limned, and invariably she holds a child in her arms.

The child's face is fresh, glad, wondersome. Out of its sweetly-opened eyes, we can see wonder, and awe, and prophecy.

The woman's face is sadder, firmer; through her eyes mystery, and reverence, and wonder, and hope, and love, shine out like stars from heaven's vaults upon the night.

The Madonnas are the great pictures. Motherhood is the greatest wonder in the world.

I go now into the books of history and be-



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gin to turn over the pages which tell of the wonders men have wrought.

Here are portrayed the achievements of statesmen, inventors, poets, and, at the bottom of each story, we are reminded of the fact that behind every great invention, and back of every great event, there stands a great man in whose brains the invention was born and the event organized.

Let us look a little deeper. Take any one you please.

Take Moses out of the ancient world, and take Napoleon out of the modern world.

Moses is the great law-giver; the great statesman; the great prophet of God's people. In his brain civilization was born, liberty took its rise, and law and order were organized. Back to him we trace jurisprudence, and ethics, and economics, and religion. He saved the people from which sprang the home, the nation, and the church.

Moses is the great figure in the first half of the world's history, and though he stands within the shadow of the world's twilight, and



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we cannot see his face, we count him the great architect of civilization.

Where did Moses learn the art? Where did Moses get the inspiration? What is the secret of Moses's power?

It was not his giant form and mighty brain. It was not learned in Pharaoh's court, where on every side was the honey of flattery, which does not build men, but weakens and destroys them. It was not even in the wilderness, where with the flocks, and the trees, and the sky he had time for plain living and high thinking. If you want to know the cradle in which his greatness was rocked, you go back to the banks of the river Nile, and see whose are the hands that fashioned the cradle of bull-rushes; and whose are the hands that rocked it; and who taught the tiny babe to speak, and to love, and to know, and to grow, and to dream, and to become. You have come upon the name of a Hebrew bondwoman tending her child. Back of Moses stands his mother. By her divine ministry the divine miracle was wrought.



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Take Napoleon, the scourge and wonder of the modern world, the man without a type and without a model.

I suppose more than a thousand books in our libraries tell his story, which reads more like some King Arthur's legend of prehistoric time. If we go back to France his ashes rest in the finest tomb ever built by the hands of man. Wherever you enter into the life of the French people, in daily press, in the shop, on the farm, on the train, in the city, on the street, in the library, in the market-place, in the school-house, and in the temple, everywhere you hear the people talking of "The Emperor" as though he were yet alive.

And he is yet living. The spirit of Bonaparte broods over the cradle of every French peasant, and whispers unlawful things in the ears of every ambitious French lad.

Bonaparte is still the idol, the inspiration, and the hero of the French nation. The peasants believe that some day he will come again, and they talk of him as the Jews of the long ago talked of the coming of the Messiah.



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The little Corsican still is ruler of the world. What was the secret of his power? Where did he learn the lesson of his mastery? Where was he anointed king forever?

It was not upon the battlefield, by war's sulphurous ointment, black and gory. It was not in the cabinet, where he dictated peace and declared war. It was not in his obscure life when as a poor subaltern he chafed through weary years of waiting. It was not even when his opportunity came, and he had a chance to put down the Paris mob.

If you want to know who was behind Bonaparte, go and look into the black eyes of the dark-skinned Corsican woman, who, when he was a babe, did heroic things and dreamed of warlike exploits. He was thinking of his own mother when he was famous and said, "The heroes of France are the mothers of France." Behind Napoleon stood his mother. Motherhood is the greatest thing in the world.

It is given to men to build states: it is given to women to build men. It is given to men to



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write poems; it is given to women to live poetry. It is given to men to form statutes; it is given to women to form character. It is given to men to subdue the earth and to possess it; it is given to women to inspire men and to control them.

And so the greatest place in the world is not the place where an Emperor sleeps: nor column that marks the spot where liberty was born, or nations took their rise: nor yet in the factories where machinery is built, or in libraries where books are gathered. It is not the palaces where kings live; nor even the temples where choirs sing and prophets rave.

The greatest thing in the world is the homes of the people, where, by night and day, women tend little children and train them. This is the true Olympus. Here the paths are all bare, because it is here the gods walk.

Unconsciously we uncover our heads when we meet a mother with her little child. She may be young, like Mary; she may be poor,



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like Nancy Hanks ; she may be inexperienced like Mary Ball, but she has power to work mysteries and perform miracles.

In sickness and in health, in toil and in ease, at home and abroad, she lives for the life that is grafted upon her own, scornful of pity, conceiving of no higher honor than by-and-by to lean upon the arm, which has been made strong by her strength, and to trust to the heart, which has been made pure and true by her own purity and fidelity.

So she lives her life. "Drudgery" silly people call it ; but unto her who is wise it is a holy ministry.

So she lives her life. "In a prison-house" unknowing ones may say ; but unto her whose eyes have been opened to see the mysteries, and far into the future, it is a queen's domain.

And then one day, when the world may have forgotten her work, because it seems so commonplace, she stands up and puts judges, and statesmen, and inventors, and poets, to shame, for she has done what they cannot



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do. She has given a man unto the world, to rule it, or a woman into the world to mother it in its sorrow. Her work is beyond praise. Her ministry is above ordination. Only Christ's can compare with it.



## The Old Meeting-House

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*"Hail to the crown by Freedom shaped.  
Whose deep foundations lie  
In veneration and the people's love;  
Whose steps are equity, whose seat is law.  
Hail to the State of England! And conjoin  
With this a salutation as devout,  
Made to the spiritual fabric of her Church;  
Founded in truth; by blood of martyrdom  
Cemented; by the hands of Wisdom reared  
In beauty of holiness."*

—WORDSWORTH.



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HERE was nothing cathedral-like about the meeting-house of our fathers. There was no stained glass, no mullioned window, no transept, no Gothic arch, no giant tower, no altar of gold, no dim religious light.

It was a plain building of wood, all painted white.

Its lines were Greek, not Gothic.

It appealed to the intellect rather than to the sensibility. It knew neither litany nor prayer-book. No gowned priest ever ministered in its walls. No mitred bishop ever came to lord it over Christ's little flock. Neither pride nor fashion ever sat among its worshippers. It is not for such things that we love it beyond the mightiest temple in Christendom.



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This summer I went back to the old meeting-house. It had lost none of its charm. It was a day in June, and that is perfection. The air was as rare as the breath of flowers. The sky was clear, and blue, and as deep as the sea. The road was over the hills, and all about grew clusters of wild roses, such as make the city rose garden ashamed. Every now and then peeped out from the green grass the red-cheeked strawberries, as tempting to the lips as the rosy-cheeked maid when the heart is young. Grand elms, one hundred years old or more, stood on every street in the village. And everywhere were daisies, star-eyed, and golden buttercups, humming bees, and singing birds. The scent of clover was in the air.

But there was a richer beauty. We came to the village nestling amid the hills. There stood an old colonial house that made all the other houses seem mean. One family had lived in it from father to son, for one hundred years. During all that time, from that family, there had always been a deacon in the



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## The Old Meeting-House

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little church. There was the old academy, which was only two years younger than the church.

The meeting-house itself was what I came to see, or rather to visit with, as with an old friend. To me its very boards were as full of memories as an old violin is full of harmonies.

I do not know how, when they study their meeting-house and village, men can say that the Puritans were devoid of art.

The New England village is the only true village in the world. The village of our Western States is like many a growing boy—ragged, unkempt, awkward, ashamed of its present, and only tolerable because it is a passing stage. It always expects to wake up next day and find itself a city. There is no village in our Western and Southern states. There are only towns.

Even in the Old World, peace to Goldsmith's ashes, there are no villages. There are only hamlets. So prevalent and dominating in the landscape is the castle of milord, that we ex-



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pect in the cluster of houses to find only peasants and retainers.

But the village of New England is neither a memory of feudalism, nor the prophecy of a city. It is a full-grown and complete social organism. Its architectural types bespeak intellect, and only freemen can build or inhabit them. We know how self-respecting these people are when we see the trim lawns, the trig fences, the well-kept gardens, and the houses, each in a fresh coat of paint. Beauty and art are evident in line, color, and landscape of the New England village.

The meeting-house, not the manor-house, dominates the village.

It stands on a hill. About it cluster the graves of the dead, and in it is the frequent gathering place of the living.

Surely no building ever devised by man was better adapted to the purpose for which it was intended. How the descendants of the Puritans ever left off the meeting-house architecture of the fathers, and built, as they have done in the last fifty years, churches of



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mongrel architecture, I cannot understand. I believe it marks more than a depravity of taste. It implies, I fear, a degeneracy of intellect. Certainly their stern, clear-cut thinking resulted in simple, clear-cut building.

For a religion that exalts the understanding, and enthrones the teaching function, save the Parthenon, of which it is an adaptation, the world has had no such perfect house as the old-fashioned meeting-house. Hasten the day when the non-ritualistic, free churches shall revert to its pure and noble type!

Outside, it is simplicity itself, as befits an expression of the faith of Him who spoke so plainly that the common people heard Him gladly. The single, simple, all-dominating spire pointed all who in the village came and went, as it is meant for a church to do, to the Infinite God, "in whom we live, and move, and have our being," and unto whom we must give account for the deeds done in the body. The pure white of it suggested the clean hands and the pure heart of him who would ascend into the hill of the Lord.



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Inside, without color or picture to distract the eye, with its high-backed pew, its wide-sweeping gallery, and its high pulpit, its noble simplicity made a perfect temple for freemen to hear liberty teach. Here religion never descended to the sensual or emotional. It was the reason of man holding communion with the Wisdom of the universe.

The history of the meeting-house is worthy of its genius.

The soil was stingy, the hills rough; the life was hard, but the first house was the first church, and the first tax went to pay the first minister. They worked for bread and they lived for character. On the wall hangs a picture of the Pastor, who served them continuously for sixty years. I heard his boys and girls, now old and gray, talk of him. I learned that this town had not been without a boy at Amherst College save for seven years in seventy years; and yet this town had never at one time more than three hundred people. When I heard the story of Adam Miller's long and obscure life, his scholarship and de-



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votion to ideals, his deep-hearted sympathy, his love of birds and trees, and the story of his church, I knew then why it was that the old-fashioned New England village was the greatest nursery of great men that the world had ever seen.

The people themselves are well worthy of admiration.

To a stranger who sees them for the first time, they do not reveal their worth. They seem dull, cold, and commonplace. But there are very few city churches whose congregations have read so many books, and who know so much about the current things of the religious life of their times. Many of them know Spurgeon's and Beecher's sermons by heart. They have read Lyman Abbott's last book; Carlyle is a sort of second Bible with them; and Emerson they can quote from memory.

They have scant respect for the travelling evangelist, coming around with what he calls a simple gospel, and proceeding to teach it with a set of pathetic anecdotes. They resent



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such diluted teaching. They want something to think about and chew on. They are as keen as a hound on the scent of a fox for strange doctrines.

Their reticence is very hard to break through. They are modest to timidity over their own attainments; and they are rather suspicious of a stranger who comes with free and easy ways. But their brains are clear; their hearts are true; their friendship once given is never easily withdrawn. It was people like these that used to propound at the examination of theological candidates this question: "Are you willing to be damned for the glory of God?" They do not ask this question any more. It has never been asked since John Lord, who had been badgered and baited by the Council, made reply: "No, but I am quite willing that the gentlemen of this Council should be." And yet, back of that old question there was a great deal which we can never afford to lose. It was the idea of loyalty to God and God's almighty purpose, without regard to recom-



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pense or reward. It was adherence to the right, not because it was easy, but simply because it was right.

It was man saying like Job of old: "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him."

It was moral backbone. It was loyalty to the obligation and the ought of life.

The old-time ministers were worthy of reverence. They were directly descended from the Old Testament Elijah. They did not know much about modern poetry, but they were deeply read in the oracles of God. They were men of one book. Their interpretation of it was oftentimes crude, but it was sincere.

The Bible was to them the word of God.

They themselves had followed the divine call, as Moses had followed it, and they knew they were ambassadors of the Most High. They were sent to warn men of their sins and persuade them to repentance. They did not stand upon their going and they did not mince words. They were not afraid to talk to a man about his soul, and they talked to him as



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if they were standing in the light of the Judgment Day.

One of these old school preachers died last Winter in Washington, in the home of his son, who is a leading United States Senator. One evening, a few weeks before he died, he came home from a church dedication. Just as he entered the house, venerable in his eighty years, and very deeply moved by the religious service in which he had taken part, whom should he meet in the hall, coming out, but the Italian ambassador, who had come on business to see the Senator. The Senator introduced his aged father and the Italian gentleman greeted him with all the charming politeness of the Latin race. Like a flash coming out of a sky, and in stentorian tones, the old man said, "Are you a Christian?" The Ambassador, though taken aback, did not forget his politeness, and quickly said, "I am a Catholic." The old man put his hand on his shoulder and looking into his eyes said, "That is all right, my brother, I do not care whether you are Catholic or Protestant. I



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want to know if you are a Christian. How is it with your soul?"

The next day the old minister was taken with his last illness. Every day the Italian Ambassador called at the house with flowers, and to make personal inquiries for the sick man. When he was dead, the Ambassador came to the house, and asked permission with some member of the family to enter the death chamber. Kneeling there by the cold form he kissed the icy hand, and laying a wreath upon his brow, went sobbing away like a child and said, "That was the first time in my life that any man ever asked me a question about my soul."

There was something about those old ministers, plain, blunt, aggressive as they were, that chains our hearts and claims our admiration. They indeed belonged to the succession of the prophets.

The old meeting-house needs no encomium. It speaks for itself. "By their fruits shall ye know them." When I saw what the church did for one little village, and thought of the



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thousands of little villages, and the church's ministry in them all, I despaired of putting into words all that the church was doing for our nation and our home. Only imagination can leap to such a distance and take in such horizons.

Next to the family the church is the noblest institution in the world. I am not sure which is older.

While it is true that there were men before there was an altar, it is also true that men and women prayed before they were married. Nobody knows how old the church is. It is hoary with antiquity. Older than literature, older than government, older than the school, older than charity, it is the mother of them all.

The church gave the world the Bible.

I know we do not often think of it so. We say the church is the child of the Bible. It is a good deal like the question, "Which is first—did the egg make the hen, or did the hen make the egg?" And yet the church is as old as the first praying man, while the



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Bible is only as old as the first inspired man. Worship comes first, and revelation afterwards. Worship ends in revelation. The church has given the world the Bible.

The church has given to the world the Christian home. Every time an English-speaking man says, "My house is my castle," he ought to remember that the church has made it so. The sanctities of the household, the sacredness of marital love, the nobility of childhood, all of them, has the church won for men and women against brutality, and bestiality, and tyranny. The church has given to the world the Christian home.

The church has given to the world its Sunday. It grew out of its teaching of rest for man and beast. It was sanctified by the resurrection day of her Lord. Where there is no church there is no Sunday. Build a church in a mining camp, and you make one day sacred in seven. Take away the church, and you have no Sunday in city or country.

The church has given education to the world. The Jews are an education-loving race.



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Why? It is because their church, called a synagogue, was the world's first free school. The church has been the founder of colleges in every land. The universities of Europe were first cathedral schools. Find a community where there is no church, and education is at a low ebb. Build a church, and you build a college.

The church has given democracy to the world.

Next to our free school, there is nothing we Americans are so proud of as our free country. The achievement of our fathers in self-government was a fatuous impossibility to the old world. Like a beckoning torch it draws the multitudes from the Old World, as the lamp draws the moths on a Summer's night. It makes the name America music in the ears of the Old World peasantry. Where did it come from? Where did we get our form of government? It is copied almost word for word from the government of the Presbyterian Church. Where did the Presbyterians get it? From the old Jewish



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church we call the synagogue. Where did we get our democratic spirit? From the Plymouth Church. Where did Plymouth Church get it? From the New Testament church, whose members were brought up in the democratic ways of the Jewish church, and whose founder was the world's greatest democrat. As Lecky puts it, "Liberty first came to Europe in a little boat with St. Paul."

The church has given morality to the world. The church did not originate moral laws. They were always in the world. They are embedded in the universe as the rocks are embedded in the earth. But men did not know it any more than they knew about gravitation, or the circulation of the blood.

That was the world to which the Christian church came at Corinth, and Rome, and Athens. The great ones were Cicero, Cato, Brutus, Cæsar, Antony, Cleopatra. They were not so much immoral as unmoral. They were fighting against righteousness, and purity, and did not know it. They were as unmoral as Caliban. Shakespeare has shown



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them to us—great, giantlike, wilful, more or less noble, but moralless men and women, thinking they lived in a moralless world. It is no wonder Rome died—it was soul rot. It is no wonder Brutus failed, and Mark Antony failed.

Then the church came with its “Thou shalt,” and “Thou shalt not,” and spelled out the great laws of right and wrong until men said, “I must ” and “I ought,” and the modern world with its heroism was born. Even dying Rome’s soul was saved out of the ashes of her material grossness and anointed to be a missionary to the barbarians.

Take the church out of New York and you will have moralless men in a moralless society. Instead of William E. Dodge and Robert C. Ogden, you will have Cato and Brutus. For John Hall and Richard Storrs, you will have Cicero and Marcus Aurelius. Instead of Washington, you will have Cæsar or Antony. For Helen Gould, you will have Cleopatra. Instead of a church and Sunday you will have the Coliseum and a brutal Roman



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holiday. The church has given and still guards the morality of the world.

The church has given philanthropy to the world.

When the Chinese High Commissioners were the nation's guests last year they went from New York to Chicago. They were taken to see the sights there as here, and in Washington. They saw everything—capitols, high buildings, factories, shipping, warehouses, railroads, theatres, schools, churches, charities. And when they were asked what they thought of America they said, "We are not surprised at your railroads and ships, we were prepared for that; not at your high buildings and rich palaces, not at your churches; we have seen great buildings and temples and marks of trade. But we are surprised, we are astounded, at your charities. We have nothing like them in China." And they asked to go again to the Hull House, the hospitals, the asylums and to the Christian Association. No, they have nothing like them in China, nor in any pagan land.



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The church is the mother of all modern philanthropy and charity. Let the church grow weak and every philanthropy and charity will die. Nourish the church and all charities will flourish as a river gives verdure and harvests to the fields on its banks.

I look on the meeting-house and I know Webster told the truth when he said: "The springs of American civilization have flowed in the wake of the Christian pulpit." The church is the school of character. Save the home alone, it is the noblest institution of earth, maybe of the angels.

I have an interest aside from reverence, in dwelling on the ministry of the old meeting-house. It is my interest in our country. America is a microcosm. Here all questions arise and here all hopes meet. Never did man stand face to face with such problems as look the American in the eyes. I will only name them now.

Here is the problem of civic righteousness in the great cities. Like the problem of the sphinx, we must solve it or perish.



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There is the twin problem of the boss and graft. There are states in which man cannot gain political preferment until he bends his knee to the boss and says, "I wear the collar." There are states where public buildings are made of stucco instead of stone, and are the mausoleums where dead honor sleeps. There have been times when a man was ashamed to confess that he was a citizen of either New York, or New Jersey, or Pennsylvania.

There is the other problem pressing upon us, and which is yet to press us more sorely than we have dreamed: the problem of what to do with the black man in the South. Our fathers took the chains from the wrist of Uncle Tom, but Uncle Tom's children are in slavery still.

There is the problem of capital and labor. Who knows the end of that strife?

There is the problem of commercialism.

We are living in an age of greed. Graft is king. Just now the curtain is being lifted from some of our great financial institutions.



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The sins of those in high places stand revealed in all their ugly nakedness, and men are wondering whether Spain was not right when she sneeringly called us "A nation of shop-keepers." People are asking "Is honor dead in high finance?" As in the days of the Old Testament prophets, in their haste to get rich, men have made merchandise of the poor and gained fortunes by robbing widows' houses. It looks as if the Day of Judgment had already come.

Panaceas are springing up on every side as thick as patent medicines in prohibition states.

Up in New England they have found a cure. I think Lydia Pinkham came from Lynn. Mrs. Eddy's anesthetic came from Concord. Like other nostrums it is being sold all over the country. It is a favorite remedy for ladies and ladylike men. It purposes not only to get rid of all sin, but all disease, and it gets rid of them by denying their existence, and informs us that they are only the delusion of mortal mind.



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Another cure for the ills of our time is the socialist's; "Away with all private property." "Let government be all in all," is the formula. Akin to it are all the men who propose to bring in the Kingdom of God by a new tariff; or free silver; or by limiting or enlarging the franchise.

I hail all these panaceas as a token of good. They are the sign of a sympathetic heart. They witness that conscience still lives and righteousness is not out of fashion.

There is another proposed remedy, which I did not class with those I have mentioned, and which I hesitate to speak of lest I be misunderstood. That is the cure that has been proposed by worried ministers and anxious Christians. It is a remedy that has a noble history and a long line of cures to its credit. It is a church cure and it is a Bible cure. I refer now not to evangelism; but to what a great many people think is synonymous with evangelism. I refer to revivalism. There is a great difference between evangelism and mere revivalism. Evangelism is the aggressive



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forward movement of the disciples of Jesus Christ in applying the gospel of Jesus Christ to men and the problems of their time. One, and one only, of the instruments of evangelism is revivalism. I believe in revivalism. But I am here to warn you against trusting over much to revivalism and professional revivalists. It is too easy a way. It has never solved the problem of missions in any foreign land. It did not solve the problem of the infant church. I am not prepared to go as far as Professor Davenport goes in that great book of his published last year, called "Primitive Traits in Religious Revivals," and infer, if not aver, that out of revivalism run riot, Mormonism came, and Christian Science came, and civic corruption came. But I am here to affirm that there is no short cut to the Kingdom of God. In any revival that springs up out of a praying and working church there can come only glory to God. But in those revivals that begin at the wrong end, and, to say the least, have the smack of being machine-made, which are worked up



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like a political campaign, and exploited by a subsidized press bureau, and are controlled by professionals, who are not always unsuspected of a love of public applause and gain, I have little hope for my country. Anybody can kindle a fire under a pot of water and raise a cloud of steam, and, if they add a brass-throated whistle, make a noise. But it is not until the fire kindled under the pot of water is harnessed to a piston rod, and a governor, and a flange, that there is power to carry the burdens of the world. We will never cast out the demons that have come in our civic and social life by mere revivalism.

Better is the ministry of the old meeting-house. It had revivalism, if the Spirit sent it, but it had a good deal more. It had teaching; it had ideas; it had prayer; it had consecration; it had going from house to house. In my humble judgment there never yet has been found any plan or institution that did so much for righteousness among men as the old parish church, with all it stood for by



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way of vision, and motive, and instruction, and the cure of souls.

Of course, "the mill will never grind with the water that is past." Of course, we can never adopt village methods for city problems. But I believe that the forces that saved America for God in the last century will save America for God in this century. I believe that the cure for the ills of our American society lies in the ministry that we associate with the old meeting-house.

The old meeting-house was an incarnation of Puritanism. And Puritanism in every age, or at least the soul of it, is this—The essential fact of the world is the individual man and the essential fact of the man is his conscience. The millennium will not be any system, however wise: it will not be a social order however just. The millennium, when it comes, will be a man who fears God and lives righteously.

I repeat it—and this is the philosophy on which the old meeting-house was built—the essential fact of the world is the individual,



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and the deepest thing about the individual man is his conscience.

Demonstrations of this truth overwhelm us. The welfare of the world is the history of individuals.

The story of America for the first one hundred years is the story of John Smith, John Winthrop, Harry Vane, William Penn, and Lord Baltimore.

Of our next period Mr. Thackeray has said, "When John Bull had become unbearable in America and it was necessary to have him kicked out, there was found a Virginia gentleman who did it with neatness and dispatch." Thackeray was right in this—our great man was the Revolution.

Come down our history forty years. The Nation's life is at stake. Are we a nation or are we a heap of sand? Again the strife is between personalities. Without Calhoun to inoculate the young men of the South with his doctrine of States' rights, there had been no war. Without Webster to instill in the youth of the North a love for the Nation,



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the Rebellion had been a revolution, and Jefferson Davis would have founded a nation. Webster was master-builder of the nation. The fundamental fact in the world is its great men.

And the fundamental fact of the individual is his conscience.

Let history again be witness.

The only failure is moral failure. Samson's arm was strong to the last—it was his conscience that died. Saul looked the king even when he stood before the witch—his soul had apostatized. Pilate remained Governor of Judea long after Good Friday—but peace forsook him. The young ruler in the New Testament was still rich after he refused the friendship of Jesus—but he took no pleasure in his riches. A hundred years ago, Byron was alive, and Shelley, and Keats, and Napoleon. Never was there an hour of time so rich in genius. And they all failed. Their failure was moral failure. All failure in college hinges on moral delinquency. The great business house totters and falls; when you



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have sought out the truth of the matter you find that some insincerity, some immorality, some dishonesty, some lie has eaten its heart out.

Why did our own Webster die of a broken heart? I will tell you.

Webster's great sorrow grew out of moral weakness. We point out his first weakness as lack of self-control—he tarried too long at the wine.

Another moral enormity was his indifference to financial obligations. Always over his ears in debt. His debts never troubled anybody but his creditors.

His public life lacked moral backbone. He forgot the Puritan conscience that says “Hew to the line,” and joined the school of compromise. I have no patience with Wendell Phillips when he says that “when Massachusetts looked on Webster, she knew how Lucifer fell from Heaven.” Wendell Phillips had a habit of now and then setting falsehood to music. Nor have I sympathy with the bigoted abolitionism that in all our his-



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tory has called the seventh of March speech "The Great Apostasy." Daniel Webster was not even a second cousin to Judas Iscariot. His devotion to his country is unsurpassed, and Massachusetts never had a more loyal son. But as I said, in public life his Puritan conscience had lost its cunning. He belonged to the political school of Henry Clay. Now that he was old, he saw the staff of compromise on which he had leaned, broken like a reed by the winds of passion, and saw tottering to its fall the Union he had given his life to build. That was the hour when his Puritan conscience was once more awakened within him and became the flaming sword that pierced his heart.

Moral problems are not peculiar to our time. Wrong and evil have always been in the world. In our fathers' day they were not less, but more. The Puritans had a certain fundamental view point of iniquity and grip on its cure, that the children of the Puritans may not lose. In our talk about "solidarity" and "upper classes," and "masses" and "un-



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churched," we are in danger of forgetting it. Solidarity is nothing but a name. There is no such thing. There is no such thing as classes, or masses, or Capital and Labor, or the unchurched. There are men who are rich and men who are poor: there are men who fare sumptuously and are cultured and there are men who are hungry and are beastly: there are men who own the tools and men who use the tools of life: there are men who go to church and men who do not go to church. Men are good and men are evil. And mark you—and this is as old as the Puritan meeting-house and older—to mend society you must mend the individual. That is what Christ meant when he went after single men and said to each one, "The Kingdom of God is within you." To mend society, mend the individual. And there never yet was any way of mending the individual equal to the way of the old meeting-house.

I never had a definition of the old meeting-house that satisfied me until I turned over to the seventeenth chapter of St. Matthew



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and I read how Jesus talked to all His disciples apart and alone. I read that while they were thus alone in holy communion, Moses came, the law-giver; and Elias came, the prophet; and then that Jesus was transfigured before them. The sacred writers called it the Mount of Transfiguration. In our modern life I have seen that very wonder. The old meeting-house was a Mount of Transfiguration in every village in this broad land.

Wherever it was, the law-giver was there. The American people are in need of a law-giver. When the republic was founded, the monarchies of the Old World scorned us, and said, "In America Demos reigns. The ship of state will swamp on a sea of lawlessness." It is not too late for their evil forecast to come true. The Republic is still an experiment. Our every and only peril has been lawlessness. If we had failed, as we wellnigh did under the Confederation, what would have been the verdict of history? "Anarchy slew her." Had the Republic gone down in '61—and she almost went down—what would his-



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tory have written? "Anarchy slew her." Where to-day does our danger lie? In lawlessness. We are almost a people without the law. Look at our working people—where the only law that holds is the law of the bludgeon that fells one man who tries to work when another man quits. Look at capital—Railroads, Oil Trusts, Beef Trusts, Insurance Companies—law-breakers every one, self-confessed and red-handed. Look at the homes of the people—"Children, honor your parents," is the ancient saying. "Parents, obey your children" is the modern practice. Look at the school. About the only law there is for the teacher is—"No matter what he does thou shalt not touch him." Moses has been so long gone that we have forgotten him, and are dancing, and feasting, before a golden calf. And as for our children they have never heard of Moses. To get rid of our sins, send first of all for Moses. Bring back the Ten Commandments. As of old, "The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom." Wherever you set up a church you enthrone



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a prophet. There Elias comes. Surely our time has been in sore need of such a witness. Materialism has swept us like a flood. The man in the laboratory has told us "man is a soulless clod," and the man in the observatory has swept the heavens and told us "they are empty." If it is true "that as man thinketh so he is," it is also true that at last we think what we are. For generations we have been in a mad race for wealth. We have spanned the seas, subdued the forests, tamed the wild beasts that perish and the wilder lightning that kills. Like the old time Roman, we have been gaining the whole world; but what gain is there if the Anglo-Saxon, like the Roman, shall lose his soul? Living for what we can see and taste, and touch, and smell, and hear, at last we have said, "I do not know about anything save what I see, or hear, or touch, or smell or taste. All knowledge is derived from my five senses."

Then we go on to apply our thesis. We find we can count the stars and weigh them; we can



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read the story of the world written on the rocks; we can count the generations of life, but with all our searching we have never found out God. So there is no God. We can name the bones and find out every nerve and artery, weigh every particle of the human body; but we cannot find in it any soul. So there is no soul. We see mud and water turned into grass—it is no miracle because every one has seen it. They say that water was turned into wine at Cana, by a very wonderful Person, and the witnesses are such noble fellows that I name my children for them, and bid them take those men of the olden time as masters, but in this they have not told the truth. It is not a miracle, because I never saw it done. There is no such thing as the miraculous. It is law, if it is everywhere; and it is superstition, if it is rare. There is no truth in anything which I cannot find out by my five senses.

Against all this the church stands in eternal witness. She protests because this doctrine is intellectual suicide. If I believe nothing



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which my senses do not reveal, knowledge is dead, and thought is only smoke. The scientific man is silenced. He has built all his knowledge on the atom, but there is no atom, because nobody ever saw it or touched it.

The philosopher is an old goose. For ages he has been preaching cause to us. But nobody ever saw causation—there is no such thing. The poet is dumb. He has been singing to us about beauty—but beauty is not. Nobody ever laid a finger on it; it is only a dream. The mother is the most deluded of mortals. She has talked of love for her child, and lived for it, and died for it. The anatomist can dissect her body and brain, and there is no love there. Love is nothing more than a vibration of nerves.

Surely here is the fatal hemlock poured for the soul. Surely this is the gospel of mental suicide. Here is the blind man saying there is no sunrise, no flower, no mountain. It is the deaf man saying there is no bird song, no love word, no heart song.

But the most of us have more than eyes and



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ears. We refuse to deny our nature. We do gain knowledge through our senses, and we believe it is true. We accept their report of the world on the outside.

But the soul too, has vision and hearing. It did not get it from eye or ear, but I know God; I have felt eternal life; I see immortality. Consciousness gives them to me as really and truly as the senses report fire, and water, and air, and sky.

There is the truth of which the meeting-house is demonstration. Here is the eternal witness that man is a soul. Here is the Father's house, and here He keeps open house for His children. "Here men talk to God—that is prayer." Here "God talks with men—that is revelation." Here men hear words that draw them away from houses and lands and above them; that drown out sorrow, and set in their skies lamps of hope. Here are set forth the laws of moral excellence so bewitchingly, that you and I feel the angels of our better nature awakened from their long sleep, and we set our faces toward the home of the



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soul. Here we hear no more the harsh words of the market place, but instead there is heard the language of the heart.

The words sound to the homesick soul like far-off and long-forgotten music. The soul knows its own name. Intuition hath set windows in mysteries. The heavens are opened. Moses and Elias are come. And when at last the preacher opens his lips inspiration is. "Here is a new bard of the Holy Ghost, and men at first hand are made aware of duty and deity."

But chiefest of all, wherever was set up the meeting-house, Christ was exalted. The only hope of our time, and of all times, is a divine Saviour. There are so many in need of a physician.

Everywhere men are saying:

*"O for a man to rise within me  
That the man I am may cease to be."*

It is humanity voicing its awful need of Christ.

Swing wide the doors of the meeting-house. Coming here, young men and maidens, like



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the "young man whom Jesus loved," shall find hung clear and shining before them the pattern of eternal life.

"Here the robber shall find Paradise; the Publican a friend; and the pure-hearted Nathaniel, a Son of God.

"And, having touched the Magdalen's heart into purity, He will touch her sister's heart into service."

Having saved society at the bottom, He will also save society at the top.

Having shown men how to earn money, He will teach them how to use it, and the strong and the rich shall bear the burdens of the weak. Capital and Labor shall lie down together, like the lion and the lamb of which the prophet spoke. There will be no more graft in politics, because there will be no more greed in men. The great President's dream will come true—"there is no more a slave nor a drunkard in the land." And America, called the "new name for opportunity," shall fulfil the dreams of her founders, and become the Republic of God.



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## The Idyll of the Cornfield



*"Books! 'tis a dull and endless strife:  
Come, hear the woodland Linnet,  
How sweet his music! on my life  
There's more of wisdom in it.*

*"And hark! how blithe the Throstle sings!  
He, too, is no mean preacher:  
Come forth into the light of things,  
Let Nature be your teacher."*

—WORDSWORTH.



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## The Idyll of the Cornfield

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IF I had my way, the plant named "Indian Maize" should be the American flower. It is beautiful to the eye, with its coat of gold, and its scarf of silk.

In majestic stature and nobility, it surpasses every other flower of the field.

From the time when it saved the life of the first colonists, till to-day, when it is the richest of all our products, its culture has been interwoven with the hopes and history of our American land.

The farmers at Concord and King's Mountain came from the cornfield. Israel Putnam came from the cornfield. Henry Clay came from the cornfield. Abraham Lincoln came from the cornfield.

It is indigenous to the New World. Indian corn is an American plant.

Moreover, it is the plant of democracy.



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Never grown by the bondman's unrequited toil, Indian corn belongs to the man who earns his bread by the sweat of his brow. It is peculiarly the grain of the small husbandman. The evidence of culture always tells us that we are in the land of homespun.

It is with the plain people that the cornfield is associated, in history, and in memory. The city boys of to-day have a thousand good things of which the country-bred youth never dreamed; but, as if to make up in one precious heritage, the country boy knew the fields of growing corn. The old fields, once full of golden ears, are now filled with golden memories.

The old cornfield was on a high hill. On one side was the forest primeval—oaks, beeches, poplars, hickories, dogwoods, and hemlocks. There once wild men threaded their noiseless way, and, even yet, the wild things hide there. On the other side, the slope was steep to the little river, where the road was, and the swimming hole, and, far beyond in the distance, the mountains.



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## The Idyll of the Cornfield

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It was level land, stoneless and stumpless. It had been the first clearing made in the forest by the pioneer, who with his own hands had hewed the farm out of the wilderness. At one end under the rock, and in the shade of the wild grape vine, which grew on the fence row, there gurgled a living spring, whose song I yet hear, and the sweetness of whose waters I will never again find on the earth.

It was early in May, when the white-oak leaves were the size of a squirrel's ear, that we planted the corn, guarding it germinant, from worms underground, and crows in the air. It was in June and early July, when we plowed it all through three times. Those mid-summer days were long, and it was hot in the corn rows. We had been at work an hour, when the seven o'clock whistle blew in the far away town, and for a full hour did we toil after the six o'clock whistle at night. At noon there was strawberry short cake, or apple dumplings, and a dash to the swimming hole.

At four o'clock, there was a half hour rest



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at the spring, with a generous slice of apple pie and real cream.

This was the conversazione of the farm.

Father, sons, and hired men, had their tongues loosed, and politics, reminiscence, farm-lore, religion, and plans for the boys, were discussed in open meeting. It was in this open parliament that many a country boy first learned to collect his wits and use his tongue. He had to be a dolt indeed if, from these discussions, he did not go forth to dream dreams.

It was in the Fall that we gathered the corn into shock, haze on the hills, yellow pumpkins on the vine, scarlet leaves on the maple tops—Nature's weather signals flying "Make ready for Winter." Later, when the frost powdered the fields at night, but the noon days of the Indian Summer were as golden as the Indian corn, there came the husking-bee—rivalry and horse-play by day, and after supper, rosy-cheeked apples, rosy-cheeked girls, frolic, dropping the handkerchief, and the Virginia Reel. And then, bliss



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of blisses, under the silver tides of the harvest moon, "seeing Nellie home."

We never heard of dinner-coats, Labor Unions, nor chaperones. We did not know that we had nerves. We were blissfully unaware of indigestion, appendicitis, and insomnia. Everybody worked with his hands, and woe unto him, if there had come into our fields a dude, or a walking delegate. "An honest day's work," "an honest dollar," "a dollar saved is a dollar earned," were some of the words oftenest on the tongue of the people: and it was their pride to match their words with their lives. Honest, industrious, frugal, simple hearted are the folk of the cornfield.

The simplicity of it all is its perpetual charm. That is what has given old New England a permanent place in literature. Modern New England has lost the charm of its simplicity, and will get its name embalmed in no literature.

Plain meeting houses, plain homes, furniture of few lines, and no gew-gaws, frocks with-



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out frills, went with customs plain and unadorned. They were men of few words, and meant them. Their creeds were long, but every word sounded like a battle. The schools had few books, but the scholars mastered them. Society had simple meetings and informal ways. Success had only a few simple rules. "Earn all you can and save what you earn" was the motto of their Arcadian economics. They encouraged thrift, and thought it neither a disgrace to be poor, nor yet a crime to be snug. Their words were few and truthful. It was in only what they did not say that guile might lie.

Simple virtues grow out of simple principles.

The sanctities of their simple life, it seems to me, are three: The first one is work; the second one is righteousness; and the third one is faith.

1. Work—you say the very word is a platitude. But the thing itself is not. It has been despised; it has been shunned; it has been counted a thing only for slaves, and identi-



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fied with the market; it has been thought of as a kind of curse, which will finally pass away, like slavery and human sacrifice.

And yet it is a sanctity of the human soul, as holy as prayer, whose twin sister it is. This will be a world of work as long as it is above slavery, and the reason why I know there will be work in heaven is because only workers can be either happy or good.

A man cannot be really honest, if he is an idler. Whether one lives in the road like a tramp, or in the palace of the idle rich and gets something for nothing, living on other people, he is a pauper, if he is not a thief. And a pauper is a kind of thief. A child without a toy or game frets. Idleness gets boys, and men, and women, into mischief. As a boy, did not most of your wrong doings and punishments come on idle days? It is after working hours that jails fill. It is usually those of idle hands who seek the divorce court.

But there is work and work. Rather there is



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only work and its counterfeits. One counterfeit, which is always calling attention to itself, its honors, its grime, its house, its loaf, its coat, its ways, is "Holding-a-job-down." It really is not a member of the work family at all, but only a poor and disgraceful relation. That sham worker would not be allowed to stay in the cornfield a single month. The weeds would bury him while he was waiting for the whistle to blow. No man is a worker who does not give his strength and heart with his time.

Another counterfeit, which abounds in our time, and wears better clothes is "On-to-the-job," and he plumes himself on his smartness. He is the man who gets dividends without producing values, whose riches are not wealth. His toil makes the world no better off, and does make other men poorer. He has exalted robbery into a profession. Once he was a highwayman. Now he has discarded the revolver, and the mask, and is called a gambler, "a plunger," or "a manipulator of stocks." No matter how he may toil or spin,



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no man is in reality a worker, whose work does not add value to the world.

The iron worker mixes his brawn and brain with the ore, and it is increased in value an hundred fold. A carpenter fells a tree, rips it into boards, and builds the boards into a box. The tree in the box is worth more than when it stood in the forest. The railroad brings the milk from the farm to the city, where the children cry for food. It ought to have a profit, for the milk is worth more in Manhattan than up state. The teacher and the minister teach arithmetic and religion; the people are both wiser and better. They deserve their stipend, for they have added value to society. The banker, by facilitating exchange, makes money earn more, and has added value to the community. However, there are not a few men who get money, not by increasing wealth, but by some confidence game or other, which only makes them rich by making other men poor. Disguise it with fine names as we may, it is not work at all, it is only robbery. That is the wealth getting



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that breeds corruption and extravagance. "Come easy, go easy," and the day of the simple life is gone forever.

The man in the cornfield should be our perpetual inspiration. He takes land that can be hired for five dollars an acre, and plants it in seed that costs thirty cents. He adds to it his labor, his intelligence, his faith. Rain and sunshine do the rest, and in the Autumn he has a crop that is worth thirty-two dollars an acre. He has made the world richer. The cattle are sleeker. Children are better fed. Who does not honor his work and rejoice in its recompense? His meal is frugal, but toil has made it sweet. His coat is plain, but he paid for it. His savings may be small, but every cent is honest, and no man has lost one penny for what he has gained. Rather is every other farmer richer for his profits. He has even made the field richer for what he took from it.

*"His hair is crisp, and black, and long,  
His face is like the tan;*



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*His brow is wet with honest sweat,  
He earns whate'er he can,  
And looks the whole world in the face,  
For he owes not any man.*

*"Toiling—rejoicing—sorrowing,  
Onward through life he goes;  
Each morning sees some task begun,  
Each evening sees its close;  
Something attempted, something done,  
Has earned a night's repose."*

2. The ethics of the cornfield are plain and easily understood. There is no casuistry there. The natural laws are ever moral laws. To the man who gets his property by saving, and toiling, and warding off the crows and squirrels, when the Bible says, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap," or "Thou shalt not steal," it is speaking a well-known language. There is a right and a wrong time to plant. There is a right time and a wrong time to cultivate. There is good seed and bad seed. There is honest work and sham work. Nature is a stern taskmaster, and, in her fields, she keeps an exact account



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with the husbandman. She never forgives a lie, nor excuses an unredeemed promise. Withal, she is as generous as she is just. For righteousness she pays thirty fold, sixty fold, and an hundred fold. Reality and honesty bring their own amazing rewards.

So the people of the fields may lack the refining amenities, and some of the gentler virtues, but theirs is a rock-like integrity. They call things by their right names. They give sixteen ounces to the pound and pay one hundred cents on the dollar. They perform what they promise, and when they promise. They offer no bribes nor take any. "They swear to their own hurt and change not." They are close fisted, and exact the last penny in trade, but they do not expect to receive something for nothing. They are close and slow to give, but theirs are the self-denying gifts that remind one of the widow's mite, because they give their hearts with them. They have founded our colleges and our benevolences. Besides, they know the difference between prodigality and generos-



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ity, and see that the spendthrift is next door to the thief. Face to face with Nature's laws, they recognize in them moralities, and right and wrong are over all their lives, as clearly as the sun is over all their fields.

The secret of the simple life of these country folk is their simple truthfulness, and the reality to them of right and wrong. One of the most puzzling complexities of our time is the uncertainty of right and wrong. Policy, expediency, and conventionality, are the mists through which we sometimes lose our moral bearing. It is hard to do the true thing, or say the true thing, and it is sometimes hard to know the true thing.

There are so many lies that bear the mark of truthfulness. A counterfeit coin, once in circulation, will pass current a long time. A lie, if it once gets seasoned, will live to a green old age.

Here is one of them: "Ministers' children are worse than other people's children." The fact is, fortunate is the child whose high chair is set up in a parsonage. Except maybe



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the farmer's household, the minister's household has been the greatest nursery of great men.

Here is another: "A minister always makes a mess of it, when he attempts to be a business man."

At first blush that seems to be true, when we remember the business confusion of a great many churches. But when we take a second thought, we remember the minister is occupied with the duties of the sanctuary end of the church, while the bag is always carried by the lordly layman. The only church in the world in which the clergy are the business managers is the Roman Catholic Church, and it is a fact of commercial history that the Roman Catholic Church can borrow more money, and at a less rate of interest, than any other corporation in the world.

Here is another lie that has been told so often that a good many people believe it: "The Church has no concern with our political life." Our fathers separated the Church from the State and were proud of it, but lit-



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tle did they dream that their children would ever go so far as to divorce religion from politics and commerce. Sometimes this great untruth has been stated boldly, as when a great senator announced in a speech that "The Decalogue has no place in a political platform." Sometimes it has been proclaimed unconsciously, as when in the last campaign it was said of an official, who merited the distinction of his fellows because he was an honest man, but as such received their scorn. And they said, "He was where it was," meaning "swag," "and if he did not get it he is a fool." Reduced to its simplest terms that means, the man in politics, who does not steal, is a fool.

Sometimes this deadly doctrine has penetrated into the commerce and life of the people. When Thomas B. Reed took up the practice of law, he wrote out to Arkansas, and asked what encouragement there was to be found in a town out there for a good lawyer, who was a Republican and an honest man. The reply came back, "Come on. As a

*H. M. Paulin*



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Republican, the game laws will protect you, and as an honest man, you will have no competition."

That simple, old-fashioned right and wrong have become obscure in our industrial, social, political, and commercial life we are all aware. The political uprisings all over our country, which are so fast making history, whether on the Mississippi, or in the White Mountain State, or here in the Empire State, are the reawakened recognitions that the safety of a state depends on the honesty of the individual man. We are going back to the simple virtues of the men of the corn-field, the secret of whose serene and simple life was their clear recognition of right and wrong. So our poet of to-day sings:

*"What do we need to keep the nation whole,  
To guard the pillars of the State? We need  
The fine audacities of honest deed;  
The homely old integrities of soul;  
The swift temerities that take the part  
Of outcast right—the wisdom of the heart.*



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*We need the Cromwell fire to make us feel  
The common burden and the public trust  
To be a thing as sacred and august  
As the white vigil where the angels kneel.  
We need the faith to go a path untrod,  
The power to be alone and vote with God."*

3. The third sanctity of their lives is their simple religious faith.

Their lives are lived in sight of a living mystery. They see miracles happen in garden and field. They feel the working of an Almighty power other than their own puny plowings and sowings. When they have done all, they have to wait for the harvest. Their vocation rests on faith in the unseen forces. They count on God in their daily business, and it is not hard for them to believe on Him. The laws of the Divine revelation, like right and wrong, reward and penalty, growth in grace, and the doctrine of Providence, are only the spiritual statement of what happens daily in their fields. They rely on God for their harvests, despite storm or frost. So they rely on God for their soul's



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welfare, despite clouds and disappointment, and are not afraid. They mark His care of the sparrows when they fall, and why should it be a hard saying that "The very hairs of your head are all numbered"? An agricultural people is always a religious people.

From the fields it never seems far to God. It was to the boy who dreamed on shocks of corn, that the ambition of Joseph's life lay all spread out before him. It was when Elisha was plowing in the fields, and making ready his flocks, that his call came to be a prophet. It was to the shepherd, abiding in the fields, on which Ruth had gleaned the golden corn of rich Boaz's harvest, that there came the angel's song. Jesus was a man of a trade and grew up in a village, but when his ministry came upon Him he went to live in the fields, and every poppy flower spoke to Him a heavenly language. And when He said, "A Sower went forth to sow," the heart of the multitude was melted and He taught them about God.

So it has been with all our poets and proph-



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ets. They have learned their deepest lessons in the fields from David's day to Burns and Wordsworth.

On a September night in 1894 there happened something in the Fellowship Club in Chicago which men are talking about yet. The guest of honor was Joseph Jefferson. As one speaker said—"His gentle words, to him as a boy, were as water to a thirsty soul, and the shadow of a rock in a weary land." Song, and speech, and story went round. It was a jolly company. The hour had come to part. The clock was on the stroke of twelve. The toastmaster, at the close, called on the Illinois War Governor, who all his life had been a plain farmer. At first he did not hear the summons, he was so busily engaged in conversation with Conan Doyle.

When Governor Oglesby at last arose, he seemed at a loss for words. Slowly his eyes went round the room until they rested upon the magnificent shocks of corn that made up the decorations for the Harvest Home. And then he said:



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“ The corn, the corn, the corn, that, in its first beginning and its growth, has furnished aptest illustration of the tragic announcement of the chiefest hope of man. If he die, he shall surely live again. Planted in the friendly, but somber, bosom of mother earth, it dies. Yea, it dies the second death, surrendering up each trace of form, and earthly shape, until the outward tide is stopped by the re-acting vital germ, which, breaking all the bonds and cerements of its sad decline, comes bounding, laughing, into life and light, the fittest of all the symbols that make certain promise of the fate of man. If a man die he shall live again.

“ Aye, the corn, the royal corn, within whose yellow heart there is health and strength for all the nations. The corn triumphant, that with the aid of man hath made victorious procession across the tufted plain, and laid foundation for the social excellence that is, and is yet to be. This glorious plant, transmuted by the alchemy of God, sustains the warrior in battle, the poet in song, and



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strengthens everywhere the thousand arms that work the purposes of life. Oh that I had the voice of song, or skill to translate into tones the harmonies, the symphonies and oratorios that roll across my soul, when standing, sometimes by day and sometimes by night, upon the borders of this verdant sea I note a world of promise, and then before one half the year is gone I view its full fruition and see its heaped gold await the need of man. Majestic, fruitful, wondrous plant! Thou greatest among the manifestations of the wisdom and love of God, that may be seen in all the fields or upon the hill-sides or in the valleys."

When the old man sat down, there was no applause. Men were awed into silence, as if in a trance, and they never knew how they separated. In the hands of a prophet, the thing which had been for them only the decoration for a pleasant hour, or the creature of their

\* This address of Governor Oglesby was missed by the reporters. It was written out from memory and published by Mr. Volney Foster, of Chicago.



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commerce, had become to them a poem, which sang to them of the human soul and the royalty of life.

Not with words, but in simple faith and humble lives, have the people of the fields felt the grain which they grew to be the revelation of God. I never see these humble people that I am not impressed with their spirit of simple wisdom. They do not talk about it, and I am not sure that they know about it, but not even the pages of history recount deeds more grandly heroic than those which are written yet in the countryside.

It is a saying of common acceptance that our great men come from the country. And if we stop to analyze it, we come out upon that fact, which has impressed all who know the story of farm people, that, perhaps beyond any other single class of men and women, they lay up treasures for the future and they deny themselves for their children. The story of many a man whom we have known whose name has never got printed in any book, has been an epic of self-sacrifice.



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Who knows how much his fields may have taught him? If he had an open heart surely he has been impressed by the drama of the year.

There is the field of corn which he planted, and over which he has toiled through the long Summer days, and out of which he has gotten his welcome harvest. What has been its message?

At first it is green, and strong, and splendid. Day by day it climbs upward, and it grows by leaps and bounds in the night time. We have heard old farmers talk about "hearing the corn grow in the night time." Standing in serried ranks, like an army, its alignment is as perfect as a regiment. When it quickly reaches its stature of adult life, it wears a plume such as no knight ever wore; and trails a scarf of gold, as fine as spun sunshine. Having conquered every obstacle, and commanding at last every stretch of the field, with its majestic touch, it changes soil and sunshine into grains of solid gold. When the Autumn comes, and trees put on their liv-



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eries of scarlet and gold, as if to be present at its coronation, the corn stands, each stalk wrapped about with cloth of gold, such as no king ever wore. And then, in the hour of its glorious perfection, and laden with wealth, it lies down to die, without a single murmur, and gives up its life to paint a picture of health in the cheek of a little child.

It is no wonder that men, living in the presence of that perpetual sacrifice, have their hearts go out towards Him, who laid down His life on the cross, and find it not hard to believe, in practice, that the strong shall bear the burdens of the weak.

And so, gathering inspiration out of their daily tasks, and neighboring fields, these are the folk whose lives are one long story of self-denial. Instead of a sacrifice, they deem it a sacrament of joy: and, for us who look on, it is a tale of heroes and heroism in common life.



## The Unfinished House



*"The world is too much with us; late and soon,  
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers:  
Little we see in Nature that is ours;  
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!  
This Sea that bares her bosom to the moon;  
The winds that will be howling at all hours,  
And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers;  
For this, for everything, we are out of tune;  
It moves us not. Great God! I'd rather be  
A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn;  
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,  
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;  
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;  
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathed horn."*

—WORDSWORTH.



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## The Unfinished House

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VERY old are the figures of our speech which liken life to a river, and character to the building of a house. We are voyagers to an unseen land. We are also builders on the way, and shall dwell at last in the house which we ourselves have made. The delight of our childhood was to watch a bird build its nest. All the human world has high respect for bees and beavers. Nothing so forcibly marks man as master of Nature, as when the pioneer goes, single-handed, and alone, into the wilderness, and, with his own hand, fells the trees, rips them into planks, and fashions them into a house for wife and child.

Man's greatest creations in every age have been his temples. So churches vast and minsters rise, and are the pride and glory of the men who build them.



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The pride of every Jew still is Solomon's temple. India is full of temples greater than St. Peter's at Rome. The temple at Thebes—is it not one of the seven wonders of the world? Of the great cathedrals, we have all read, and wondered, and marvelled. They are poems and prayers in stone; and every one is a Mecca for a world's pilgrimage.

But greater than any earthly building, which we have seen, was the dream of the man, whose biography consisted in the saying, he “looked for a house whose architect and maker was God.”

What does that mean? What sort of man was that? We know that he was a man who lived in tents, and dwelt among people who lived in tents. What was he talking about a house for? We know how his neighbors must have laughed at him, and called him a dreamer and visionary, to be talking about a house whose architect was God. What sort of man was he?

I knew that old man, or else it must have been his younger brother. He lived in the hill



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## The Unfinished House

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country through which, long ago, Washington led his little army across the mountains against the French. Not far away, too, the armies of a later time passed and repassed, as ebbed and flowed in war the fortunes of the Republic. It is far away from any large town, and to get there one has to travel many miles on a lonesome road. To-day, when you come upon that settlement you find forests cleared away, the swamps drained, and many acres of smiling farms, and on each one there stands a neat, two-story, white farmhouse. It is a smiling land and thrifty. The landmark, which attracts the attention of every traveller, is the one brick house, which stands on the hill, and is three stories high. Its architecture is worthy of a more pretentious community. The walks of gravel are perfectly kept, and the lawn is as velvety as any in England. Even the careless passer-by wonders how that house comes to stand there, so remote from the highways of wealth and civilization. That is the story I want to tell.



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It used not to be so. The first time I ever passed through that country, there were only a few straggling farms, and they were hemmed in, on every side, by the woods, and in the midst of them were great undrained swamps filled with brush. The houses were one-story, and mean, and unpainted. It was called the "land of the buckwheat cake." It was supposed that nothing grew there but buckwheat, and that the inhabitants lived on it the year round. Even then, on one of the smallest and most unkempt of the farms, near by the road, stood the walls of this brick house. It was known for miles around, and had been the laughing stock of the entire country side. Whenever it was spoken of it was called "The unfinished house."

There came a time when I knew something more about the story of it. The old man, who had come in there after the war, was a Yankee. He had two sons and one daughter, very little money, a stout heart, untiring faith, and this dream of his, which he had brought with him from his Boston boyhood, of a



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## The Unfinished House

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home. I came to know the young people, and when I went into this house, I was still more puzzled than when I had seen its ragged outside walls, rough, and unpainted, and porchless.

On the first floor it was very much like every other house, only it was exceedingly plain and bare of furniture. The man had done most of the work himself, and everywhere were unpainted boards.

It was the upper stories of the house that seemed strange. Half of the second story was thrown into one great room. There was no carpet on the floor. The walls were utterly bare, and the only furniture in it was some hand-made chairs, and a hand-made table, and some rough book shelves around three sides of it. The old man called this his library, though I doubt if there were twenty-five books in it. His eyes glowed with tender fire when he fingered caressingly his Emerson, his Milton, and his Shakespeare.

The third story was one great bare room. There were in it two chairs, some stools, and



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a table. All of them he had made himself. On the table there rested a Bible, a hymn-book, Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress," and a well-worn Thomas à Kempis, and in the corner was a wheezy, phthisicky, reed organ. He called this his "Upper-Chamber." Here twice a day he held the family devotions. Here on Sunday they sang hymns, and he would read from Bunyan, or the Bible.

It made a great impression on me to be in this old man's unfinished, and, what seemed to be, too ambitious house. I shared the general feeling of criticism that he was improvident, and foolish, because he seemed to neglect his farm in order to build this house: which it seemed he never could finish, and which if it were finished, was altogether out of harmony with its surroundings. At the same time, the old man's spirit, his hopefulness, his high ideals, his simple devotion, above all his wonderful flow of conversation about high things, and his ability to repeat great books from memory, filled me with a kind of admiration and awe.



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Since then I have heard scholars recite the Book of Job to subdued audiences. But I have never forgotten the first time I ever heard the Book of Job recited from memory by that old man. I was thrilled as by a voice from heaven.

As the years went on people would send from a distance for that old man to come, when they were near death, and when he had repeated to them the Twenty-third Psalm, and prayed with them, with his heart of open vision, they were comforted, and felt that God was near.

For years I lost sight of the old man and his unfinished house. When once again I came to it, it was all finished without and within. And as I have suggested, it is worthy of a far more populous community. And the old man, as I last saw him, with his sunshiny heart and his sweet face, and his long flowing snow-white hair, seemed like St. John the Divine.

He told me how, at last, the house had been finished. For years he and his sons had been



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working on it, and he almost despaired of his ever seeing it finished. Then an old-time friend of his had come out from Boston and been his guest. He had tasted the spring that was in the far corner of the yard, where often I had tried to drink, but whose waters were bitter and brackish. That man had taken away the water and had it analyzed. A railroad had been built within a mile of the old man's farm to take away the iron ore and the timber. This friend showed the old man how to market that mineral water. The other day, I saw a bottle of it on sale on the very street where this study fronts, as I write. And so the water, which had been wasted, became for the old man a river of gold: and his house was finished, splendid without and beautiful within.

His farm has become the model farm. His influence in the community is the secret of the tidiness, the thrift, and the well-being of that entire country side, not in material matters only, but in higher things also.

His children first went to college. One of



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them is a well-known scientist. Another one of them is a successful lawyer in Chicago. And the other one is a teacher in the Academy, which has been built by those farmers in their midst, under the inspiration and leadership of this old man. And near it stands the finest church that I have ever seen outside of a city; and its ministries have gotten hold of the hearts of all who live within a wide area. The neighbors no more laugh at the old man and his dream, for his house is the pride of the place. The old man is their idol, their father; and it is beautiful to behold the respect with which the younger generation regards him.

When I came to know the end, and saw how much wiser he was than his neighbors, and than all of us who made sport of him, I said to myself, this story of the unfinished house is the story of the man who, all his life, looked for a "house whose architect and maker was God." Is this not a parable? Is there not a poem here for a poet, and a sermon for him who hath an open heart?



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## Heroes and Heroism

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“ Building a house ”; is there a more perfect figure of the achievement of character? John Ruskin did well to write a book on it. Travelling from land to land, he stood reverent before the world’s greatest architecture. Marking its beauty, he also saw the law of its permanence and decay. He found that destruction overtook every dishonest tile, every imitation stone, and all sham workmanship. He found that endurance came from obedience to Nature’s great laws. Reverence made the temple grand, and sacrifice lent it glory. So he found that even houses were builded on morality. And reading the secret of architecture in its laws like Truth, Beauty, Obedience, Reverence, Sacrifice, he wrote his book on soul building. For, as he said, “ the soul is a temple more majestic than a cathedral. Principles are foundation stones, habits are pillars. Every thought drives a nail. Every act girds or weakens a timber. Every high resolve lends beauty and every ignoble thought defaces and mars.” Memory hath its hall, Imagination its gal-



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## The Unfinished House

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lery, Reason a throne, and Conscience a judgment seat. God is the architect, Christ is the master-builder, and man himself is the workman. Life is our working day. Death is our moving day; and we shall dwell at last in the house we ourselves have made.

“The unfinished house”—is there not something familiar to our experience in that figure also?

How often we hear people say, “I wish I could live my life over again, if I knew as much in the beginning as I know now.”

One of the great men of the nineteenth century was undoubtedly Lord Shaftesbury. The blood of seven English earls flowed in his veins. From a child he dedicated himself to high thinking, and to the giving of his possessions and strength to God's poor. For forty years in the House of Lords and before the people, he was the champion of every great reform for the uplifting of the masses. He was the father of England's juster laws and better industrial system. When he died, all Englishmen wept, as if they had lost a



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father. The costermonger, the orphan, London's East Side, the people of the mines, and the children of the factory, all bore abundant testimony to their affection for this proud lord, who had been the champion of the poor. In the House of Lords, Lord Salisbury, speaking for nobility, testified that the greatness of England lay, not in her wealth, nor in her fleets, but in "this man who had gone down to the grave, honored by the great and beloved by the poor."

And yet, when Lord Shaftesbury came to the end of his long and useful life, he said, "I cannot bear to die and go out of the world leaving so much misery in it."

Mr. Gladstone was the best known Englishman of his day. The pride of Oxford, the hope of the Tory party, the unfaltering champion of the church, the old man eloquent, became a Liberal and a servant of the English people, until his proudest title, and the one by which he will be forever remembered, is the Great Commoner. He was not only a miracle of eloquence, but, as a worker,



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he has had few equals. In his library he kept two desks. On one he worked all day on problems of statesmanship, and, on the other one, he utilized every spare moment of the long hours of the night on questions of scholarship. This man of our grandfather's time lived, as we know, to our own time, and yet when he seemed eternally young at three and eighty, he said, "I feel that my life has only begun. What I have accomplished is only a preparation. What I intend to do lies all spread out before me."

I once heard an old man, whose name has been a household word in this country, both for his achievements in statesmanship, and for his work in the world of reform, speak on the topic "What would I do if I had life to live over again?" It was beautiful and simple to hear him say he would have his life as it had been—cradled among the plain people, his youth in the country, dedicated to the church and Christ while he was yet a boy. But I will never forget, with what solemnity the old man said, "If I had my life



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to live over again, I would put less emphasis on what men call a career, and I would hold it sacred as a mission. I have never given much time to the making of money, or the courting of popularity; but if I could live over again, I would give far less time to these things, and I would give more time to books and to my home, and to my church, and to the friendless and unchampioned among God's children."

As I think about it, on the moment, I can remember only two men who, when they came to die, looked back upon their lives with a feeling of satisfaction, and the feeling that they were complete in every part. And who were these two men?

First of all, He who from the beginning was caught in the web of eternity, and whose life pattern came directly from God. Though He lived but a little while, He challenged the world on His cross with "It is finished."

And the other one was His greatest disciple, who lived unto old age, and trod the hardest path ever trod by man, except the one trod



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by his Master. When he came to the last hour, and Death, impatient, was standing at his elbow, he finished his last message with, "I have finished the course."

Jesus and Paul looked back upon their past and it was complete. There was nothing more left to be done. But otherwise the universal experience of humanity is that ours is an unfinished house. Both the universal experience, and the exceptional experience of these two sublime heroes of humanity, bear witness to this—that it is on its moral and spiritual side that the incompleteness lies. The only thing for which we care much, at the end, is the morality of the workmanship, and the spirituality of the design.

This may seem clear to our experience if we state it another way.

The plan of our soul house calls for a basement and three stories.

The basement is next to the ground, and it is the mere animal life.

The first floor is next above it, and represents the ordinary life of civilized man with



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its necessity for toil; with its need of food and drink; and with its ties of family and society.

Above that is the second story, where the library ought to be and the art gallery. That is the chamber for friendship with the great scholars, and the great masters.

And, then, there is the third story, which can never be better called than by that name in the New Testament—"The Upper Room," the guest chamber of the soul, where the soul keeps company with God, and where for guests there come Christ and His disciples. Now, when we come to study the house in which we live, alongside of this pattern of the soul, right away every one of us knows that he is living in an unfinished house.

Some there are who live in the basement. They are nothing better than the brute. Whether they live on far away islands, and eat the flesh of men, or whether they live in cities, and prey on the virtues of men, they are cannibals, and are like the brutes that perish.



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The first flight of stairs brings us into the chamber of civilization. It is here that the multitude dwells. Life is toil, laughter, tears, holiday, a game of profit and loss. To give little; to get much for stomach, and back, and pocket, is the story of their endeavor. Most of them know that there ought to be other stories to the house. Some of them have built even the walls and a stairway leading into the upper chambers. But how rarely they climb the stairs. How seldom they feast on a great book. How rarely they hang a picture. How lightly do they prize the possibilities of that higher altitude. If you were to ask them why, they would tell you that Shakespeare was dry, and Job was stupid, and the Madonna never speaks, or that they had no time. They are so busy with eating, and drinking, and amusing themselves, that they have never had time to think. Occupied with the stones of the street, they have almost never turned their eyes to the stars. Go up another stairway. In that second story there is more room, less furniture, and



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fewer are the inhabitants. There are more whom the world knows, and the society is choice, and the conversation is exhilarating as rare wine. When you and I have gone there occasionally, we have come away hungry-hearted, and with a resolve that we would soon return and make it our home.

And, then, in the Upper Chamber, how simple is the furniture, how few are the guests, but how much clearer is the atmosphere. Like Peter of old, when we have sat in some golden hour upon this housetop, we have wanted to make it our dwelling place forever. It is the glory of the house and the crown of all the rest. The experience of that Holy of Holies we cannot put into words. Looking at the house of character with its myriads at the base; its multitude on the first floor; with its select inmates on the second floor; and with the elect souls and elect hours in the upper room, we catch a glimpse of what the soul might be. And then, looking at ourselves, and remembering on what floor we



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are living, almost all of us will cry, "Ours is the Unfinished House."

This is taken for discouragement by many. They dwell upon man's captivity to disappointment, and say, "Man never is, but always is to be blessed." They point out that we are all children of the unattainable. Our visions are our torments. And this sense of failure begets paralysis of will.

Men are like children, who, because they cannot finish their playhouse in a single forenoon, abandon it altogether.

We are all impatient and fretful because God is so slow. He takes a thousand years for a day, while we want to make a day do for a thousand years.

Many a man would be rich, if he could make a fortune in a single year; but because it takes the toil and sacrifice of many years, he gives up the quest.

Many a boy starts in to be a scholar, who ends by being a smatterer — it takes too long.

All of us have had our dreams of moral ex-



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cellence. But we have tried so often and failed, and when we did not fail, the progress was so slow that it seemed to be no progress at all. So we have given up our dream of being poets and prophets, and contented ourselves with a lower attainment.

We all want to retire too soon.

We need the Oriental patience that spends ten years on one little rug; a lifetime on one little carving or picture.

We need the sublime patience of Jesus, who could wait for His kingdom, and His sublimer faith, that made Him see that even His cross would eventuate into a throne.

Our mistake is in supposing that it is our purpose that is limited, because it is unfinished; and that the evil and failure, against which we battle, are unlimited and stronger than it. The failure is finite: the evil is limited. Our purpose alone is immortal.

Our disappointments are workers for us in disguise. Winter is an ally of Summer, though Winter seems to banish Summer from the fields. Sorrow is Joy's sister, not her



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enemy. Though she drives Joy out of her kingdom, it is only that she may plow the soil deeper and make it richer against Joy's return.

There is a very deep saying in that wonderful drama of Job. You remember where Satan, the tester, is talking with God about His children, and God boasts of His servant Job. Satan intimates that Job's rectitude is based on his good fortune, and would vanish away, if Job were to fall on evil days.

And God tells Satan, the tester, that Job is in his hands. All that he has and all that he is—his flocks, his herds, his good name, his public office, his untold wealth, his children, his health even, are all in his hands to do what he will with them, but "lay not thy hand upon his life."

I have never heard a statement about the power of evil equal to that. We hear it and we know what before we had never known—that evil hath its limitations. It can try and test, and destroy circumstances and sur-



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roundings, and fortune, and happiness, and health even, but it has no power over the life. You know, and I know, that when Satan, the tester, had seized Job, as the serpent seized Laocoön, and threatened to crush him in its loathsome embrace, that Job arose out of his troubles an hundred fold greater than he had been in his prosperity. His troubles became a throne from which he rules the world to this hour.

Men and women, you all live in an unfinished house. Your career has been cut short; your dream of knowledge has vanished away; your life of happiness has been marred; your love even, on which you leaned, is a broken staff; ye are children of disappointment and failure and incompleteness. Be not cast down. By Jesus Christ, who died for you, this incompleteness, if understood aright, is God's certificate that you are yet to be what you dreamed: are to be more than men understand; are to rise unto the very stature and likeness of Jesus Christ. Take His word for it and His cross, you are yet to "rise on the



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stepping stones of your dead selves to higher things."

And, now we have come to the heart of the matter.

You remember how the old man, who had worked at his house for long years, began to fear lest he should never finish it. His strength was waning. Then came his wise friend from Boston, and said, "You are weak, and have failed, because you have wasted your wealth. Dedicate that unused spring to your needs." And laying his hands on the spring, which was going to waste, he turned it into a golden river. Quickly did the house go on to completeness, beautiful without and within.

It is from this unfinished house that I learned how glorious it was to be a poet, or a prophet. Who would want to be a preacher, if he had to preach to angels? It would be "carrying coals to Newcastle."

Who would want to teach, if he were sent to a whole race of men like Shakespeare's Caliban, a little above the brute, and a little be-



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low humanity? It would be to cast pearls before swine.

But to men and women, who have already in them the patterns and prophecies of the divine life, who year by year have been struggling to realize their moral dreams, who, when they have failed, and been wounded, have risen again and again, and tried to be the men and women they had dreamed they ought to be—it is a glorious thing to proclaim virtue to them.

I am glad that I have a parish of people who live in unfinished houses. It is for them I have a message. It is this—While men have been watching your failure and laughing at it, and scouting your vision; and while you yourself have grown discouraged and almost said “It is no use to try,” the Wise One has been watching and taking note of your purpose and high dream. All the time that you have toiled, and tried, and failed, and risen again and again to the unfinished task, He, who marks the sparrow when it falls, and hath numbered the hairs of your head, hath



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composed into a melody your will and intentions, with which He makes His own heart glad. He offers himself as your ally.

He knows that you have done your best, but you have failed to use all your strength. Somewhere in your life there is wasting away a spring, a power, that if utilized would give you the victory. He has come to show you how to harness that unused force, and, by dedicating it to your ideal, to gain your quest.

With every different man it is a different thing that needs to be utilized.

One man needs to dedicate his wealth, as Joseph of Arimathea did. When he had dedicated that to make a grave for the Master, he became immortal.

There are those who need to dedicate their influence and name. Nicodemus did. As long as he was a disciple in secret, the dream of his life was unsatisfied. But when he went on record for Jesus Christ, he became one of the architects of the Kingdom of God.

Other men there are who need to utilize that



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goodness which used to be so fragrant in their youth, but which seems to have been covered up and lost. It was when Zaccheus put into the hands of his Master those desires for a better life, which his neighbors thought had never been, and which he himself thought were lost, that he became the great man that he has become.

Some, like Martha, must dedicate the work of their hands. It was for her humble service that she won fame.

Others, like Mary, must dedicate their heart's devotion. It was for the mystic that was in her, and for her love, that we name our children after her.

We all know the name of John Bright, England's grand old man. Do you know the secret of the might of John Bright? It was not his wealth; it was not his oratory; it was not even his gift for statesmanship—all these he had from the first. But when his daughter died, and his heart broke, standing in his own room beside the coffin, he seemed to hear the cry of the orphans of England. Dedicating



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his kindly heart to humanity, and becoming father to the fatherless, John Bright became the giant of England.

It seems like a little thing to dedicate your name, your influence, yourself, to the Divine Ideal. It is always the little things on which the great things hinge.

It is a very little thing for the flower, in the morning, with its pale face, to open the window of its petals, but that lets the sun in. And before the day is done, the sun paints a picture there, and fills its heart with perfume that cheers every passerby.

It is a little thing for the man to take the hours and the days, and to humble himself, and go down into the world of his little child; to learn again the games; to play at hide-and-seek; to be enthralled by the fairy story. Men laughed when they saw Lyman Beecher, at the height of his fame, down on the floor playing horse with his little boy. But that little thing opened his heart to the child, and when he opened his heart he made himself wise, and simple, and gentle, and



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sunny. It also opened the child's heart, and when the great father came into the child's heart, he kindled a fire which in after years became a beacon for people in a dark and stormy time.

It is a little thing for the maid to open her heart to the whispers of her lover, but when love comes in and transfigures her life, love has changed the school girl into a Madonna, with mystery looking out of her eyes, and healing power in her gentle touch.

It is a little thing for a strong man to stand up and be counted. It is the opening of a door and bidding God come in. It is the signal for angels to work with him for the completion of his house. Oh, there are so many, many houses, where commerce lives and society lives, and pleasure chases time with flying feet; so many where evil holds its court and darkness reigns; where temptations grow strong, and the children of men are taught to forget that they are the sons of God.



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It seems to me for a man who loves his city, and for a man who loves his child, and for a man who has not lost memory of his own childhood, and who still loves his youthful dream of goodness, that it is a great thing, and not a little thing, for him to say, like the man at the well in the New Testament, who met the disciples of the Master, 'Come, and I will open up for the Master the upper room of my house.' I know some of us are almost ashamed to do that because the walls are so bare and there is so little furniture. There are so few pictures of holy memories; we have so few tapestries of great beliefs; we have so scant a library of divine knowledge. But it does not take much furniture. What Christ wants is the room. He will bring His own furniture, and His own faith, and His own companions, and His own love, and He will dwell there, and glorify the house.

Think of it! If a thousand of us, or ten thousand of us in every city, would open up the upper chamber of the soul, the cities of



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men would become the cities of God. And you, and I, and all of us, would be the man, spoken of in the New Testament, who at last had found the "house whose architect and maker was God."



The Old Man of the Mountains



"'Tis he whose law is reason; who depends  
Upon that law as on the best of friends.  
Who, if he rise to station of command,  
Rises by open means; and there will stand  
On honorable terms, or else retire,  
And in himself possesses his own desire;  
Who comprehends his trust, and to the same  
Keeps faithful with a singleness of aim;  
And therefore does not stoop, nor lie in wait  
For wealth, or honors, or for worldly state;  
Whom they must follow; on whose head must fall,  
Like showers of manna, if they come at all;  
Whose powers shed round him in the common strife,  
Or mild concerns of ordinary life,  
A constant influence, a peculiar grace.

'Tis finally, the Man, who, lifted high,  
Conspicuous object in a nation's eye,  
Or left unthought-of in obscurity,—  
Who, with a toward or untoward lot,  
Prosperous or adverse, to his wish or not—  
Plays, in the many games of life, that one  
Where what he most doth value must be won:  
Whom neither shape of danger can dismay,  
Nor thought of tender happiness betray;  
Who not content that former worth stand fast,  
Looks forward, persevering to the last,  
From well to better, daily self-surpass;  
Who, whether praise of him must walk the earth  
Forever, and to noble deeds give birth,  
Or he must fall, to sleep without his fame,  
And leave a dead unprofitable name—  
Finds comfort in himself and in his cause;  
And, while the mortal mist is gathering, draws  
His breath in confidence of Heavenly applause."

—WORDSWORTH.



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## The Old Man of the Mountains

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HO can ever forget the days spent out of doors? For months afterwards, as we have gone about our work, the breath of the pine tree would steal in at the city windows, and we have had to struggle against tears like a homesick girl. When we are weary, we long for the caressing voice of the murmuring sea, or the flow of the tireless river, or the song of the brook, which like a mountain sprite dances through sun flecks and shade patches. We go to sleep calmed by its singing, and its laughter gets tangled with our dreams.

But, better than all, do some of us love the mountains. They seemed friendly when our eye fell upon them in childhood. Like sentinels they stood about our father's house. We



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have given our dead into their keeping. We love the mountains.

The mountains are the place where the earth lifts itself up to kiss the sky, and the granite and the grass keep company with the stars. The earthy has locked hands with the Infinite. Mt. Blanc, the Jungfrau, and the Matterhorn, with their solitary grandeur, awe the traveller, and wellnigh overwhelm him. The Swiss peasants have a legend that "when clouds lift their veil over the face of the Jungfrau even the hens forget to cackle." Somebody has irreverently said that he "wished it were true of 'Cook's' tourists."

The German is proud of his Rhine and the Scotchman of his Highlands. We are likewise proud of the great mountains in our own Westland. The great ones stand guard over the Pacific. But after all, who of us has not heard, in song and story, of the Catskills, the Adirondacks, the Green Mountains, and the White Mountains?

If you have time, go to the mountains. If you go to the White Mountains, no matter what



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## Old Man of the Mountains

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the guide books say, do not go first of all to Mount Washington, king of them all. If you can, approach through the far eastern gate, as the sun approaches them, and enter by the way of the Rangeley Lakes.

When you come to the last lake, Umbagog, you will find yourself upon a mere as beautiful as the English Lake of song and story. On three sides of you the Grafton Mountains, the Presidential Range, and the Franconia Mountains will arise above you pile on pile, until their summits are wholly lost in the clouds. When you have left the lake, and sailed a little way through the turbulent Androscoggin River (which is not turbulent there) you will make the land, and, through a charming country of beautiful farms, you will drive through the Dixville Notch. You will spend the night, and maybe a day, at the Balsams, the inn of highest elevation in the mountains, built in what is "Nature's punch bowl," and on the banks of a crystal lake, that looks from the heights above it like a drop of silver. Then by team again,



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when you have finished your ramble to the heights, you will go on, over the slopes, out of the Androscoggin valley into the Connecticut valley. There you will find the ways which lead you to Jefferson, and Clay, and last of all to Washington.

If you have the time, and the strength, and the courage, you will tarry by the way two days, and climb the rugged slope of Chicorua.

You will start up at three o'clock in the afternoon. By six you will be two-thirds of the way up, where, upon a rocky ledge, you will cook your supper. Then you will push on over the toughest climb of all to the ledge above, where you will wrap your blanket about you, and, with no other covering but the stars and the pines, will sleep, waiting for the sunrise. You need not be surprised when, like Jacob, having taken a stone for a pillow, you will dream that a ladder is let down from Heaven and that angels are your guests. Anyway, in the morning, when you are called a great while before day, you may



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feel as lame as Jacob did at Jabbok. With a hurried breakfast you will leave your camping-place, and push on through the darkness for one hour, and then, putting on your coat, and wrapping your blanket about you, you will sit shivering, waiting for the sunrise. No one who has seen it will ever forget the splendor of a Chicorua sunrise.

But whatever else you miss, do not fail to go and gaze upon the "Old Man of the Mountains." It is a great rock set high in the Franconia Range, which is so formed that from a distance it looks like a great human face. In its profile it is a great head, such as we have seen in sculptors' windows for heroes and demi-gods. Its masterful intellectuality is overlaid with benevolence. I do not know how, but kindness is there. The dwellers in their farm house know well the Great Stone Face, or the Old Man of the Mountains, as they call him.

Tradition tells us, that sitting upon his father's doorstep in his childhood and gazing at the Stone Face, Daniel Webster resolved



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to be a man. Pilgrims come from afar to see the wonder. Tired men and women, looking on that noble brow day after day, have the care stolen from their heart, and hope, coming silently, hangs a lantern in their storm-sobbing sky. Artists come direct from Angelo's "Moses" and "David," and, with head uncovered, stand looking at the wonder, and, filled with awe, say, "A greater than Angelo is here." Is it merely a freak of mindless earthquake, or has an angel held a chisel against the face of the mountain? Who knows but that One who ever writes His word on men's hearts, and who day and night paints His glories on the sky, hath for once writ His message in stone!

Anyhow, men have always found a message in it. Ever since we were children, we have been charmed with Hawthorne's story.

He names the little boy Ernest, who sat on his father's door-step looking up at the Great Stone Face. At last he said to his mother. "It is so kind, so noble. I wish it



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## Old Man of the Mountains

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would speak. I think its voice would be pleasant."

"If an old prophecy should come true," said the mother, "some day there will come a man with a face exactly like that, who will be the father and hero of the people of the valley and will bring in an era of happiness."

"I do so hope," cried the boy, "that I shall live to see him."

"Perhaps you may," replied his mother; "only be watchful and try to be like him that you may know him when he comes."

So the boy living in the sight of it always had the thought of the Great Stone Face in his heart. At times even, he imagined that it smiled on him. It became his master and his ideal.

Soon after he had become a man, word went through the valley that the long expected great man was about to appear. He had been born in this valley. As a lad he had gone away to make his fortune. He was now a merchant prince, and he was coming back to



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his birthplace, and, by his gold, was to bring in the new era for man.

When he came Ernest saw only an old wizened man with yellow skin, throwing coppers to the beggars in the streets. He was a mammon worshipper. He did not bring in a new era for the men of the valley. Still they waited for their hero.

More years went by. Again, the rumor was abroad that the great man was about to appear. He was a soldier this time. He, too, had been born in the valley; but now came back a hero of a hundred fights. Old Blood and Thunder they called him, and everybody said he looked like the Man of the Mountains. But Ernest knew better, for there was nothing of the benevolence in his face, nor the peace, which was written upon the rock. Again was the people's hope deferred.

Still more years went by. Again expectation of the coming one sat upon the people. This time the great man was to be an orator, a politician. But when he came there was still something wanting in his face, and disin-



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## Old Man of the Mountain

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terestedness and unselfishness were wanting in his heart. Again the people shook their heads and sadly turned away.

By this time they had lost faith in the prophecy itself. Dimmer and dimmer it had grown, until, at last, it was only a tradition, which the old men remembered.

Ernest himself had grown old. Like a greater than himself, "he had grown in favor with God and man." He was known through all the country side for his wisdom and sympathy. When he spoke Truth herself seemed to talk. He was a voice. Often and often, his fellow-men gathered about to hear him talk about life and its problems, and he held over them a strange charm. Young men were fascinated by him, and went away lured to great purposes and high aims.

In time, men came from afar, as pilgrims to a shrine, to communicate with this simple-hearted seer. To these pilgrims, one evening, surrounded by his neighbors, Ernest, now that he was old like St. John the Divine, retold the tradition of the Great Stone Face.



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His words had a subtle power because they were matched with his love. It was not sound he uttered but a message. Pearls pure and precious were dissolved in its depths. Suddenly, while they had been looking upon the Great Stone Face, and upon the face of the old man, with one voice they said, "Behold, Ernest's face is the exact copy of the Great Stone Face." The prophecy had at last been fulfilled in the life of one who had lived among them, and had wrought always in love, and under the eye of the great ideal in stone.

Such in substance is Hawthorne's story. But he only told it; he did not create it. That tale had passed from father to son through an hundred generations. The Indians knew it, and in their vocabulary, the rock had been called the Old Man of the Mountains. Instead of Ernest, they called the boy "Moon-in-the eye." The story was the same, however. Now the hero was Rich-in-wampum; and now Blood-in-the-face; and now an old medicine man, called Golden Tongue. But the red men



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## Old Man of the Mountain

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only found disappointment. From generation to generation the legend remained unfilled. At last the pale-face came.

I have heard that same story from father to son in the southern mountains. Its counterpart belongs to the land of William Tell. Its ancestor made its home in Greece—where men's homes were not more than ten miles from the hills, nor more than forty miles from the sea.

It is a world story.

Thoughts crowd upon us too fast for words. There is only time in this hour to name the underlying principles of soul building revealed. We have come upon ledges of gold. We ourselves, walking in the laboratory of character, have come upon God in His act of creation. Mark what you see, and remember the mystery!

Round about the valleys always and everywhere there tower the mountains. Above the homes of men there is always a Great Stone Face. Above us there always blazes the Ideal—God hath hung it in our sky. "I know not



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## Heroes and Heroism

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why it is, but it is God's way of doing things—drawing them upward from above.\* Would He give the dust of the street a nobler expression? He sets a plant by the little rivers and draws the water upward through bough and branch till it reddens into wine in the purple cluster of the grape, or drops into the golden juice of the orange. Would He transform the dust of the earth into nobler form? In the forests He draws upward the carbon and the iron into masts for the ships and beams for the house; in the fields through the stalks of the husbandman, He lifts the phosphates into wheat and golden corn. Such is the story of every forward movement in society. He sends out one great, strong man, and the whole nation is lifted up to some higher, nobler level. One Dante, and no more, but all Mediæval Europe is a nobler thing for this exiled poet's deep poem, and his life deeper than his poem. One Plato, and no more, but forever because of this teacher, is Greece the school mistress of

\* Newell Dwight Hillis.



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the world. One Wycliffe—‘the first of the Englishmen’ they called him, but because of him all Englishmen are nobler, freer, grander. One Jesus, no more—the only begotten Son—and enough, for wherever, as He himself said, He has ‘been lifted up hath he drawn all men unto himself.’”

Omnipotent for man is the power of the Ideal.

A wall is broken and tottering to its fall. Buttress it with stone, or brace it with slabs, and it will stand, though it will never be restored.

A man is falling and you cannot hold him up with things. But sow a seed in his heart, or plant an ideal in his breast, and lo! he is healed, and strong, and stalwart. That is why I envy the teacher, not because he teaches my boy to count, or write, or read, but because he plants a purpose in his breast, which will bud, and grow, and unfold, forever. There is the supreme might of the minister.\* ‘He knocks at doors a long time

\* John Ruskin.



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locked, and whose hinges are rusty, until they open; he calls down darkened streets, where Wisdom herself hath called and no man hath answered, till the angels of our better nature, asleep so long that we ourselves have counted them as dead, awake into life. Hanging a holy purpose before them, these sleeping angels recognize it with a glad cry, and stretching out hands for them, join hands with God.' It is when a great ideal is hung up before a man and he seizes it, that a great life begins.

Here is where the failures of life come in. Men ignore the ideal, and put their trust in things.

They trust in wealth.

Henry George, in the beginning of his book on "Progress and Poverty," writes like this: "Wealth would make real poverty a thing of the past. Could a man of the last century—a Franklin or a Priestley—have seen, in a vision of the future, the steamship taking the place of the sailing vessel, the railroad train of the wagon, the reaping machine of



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the scythe, the threshing machine of the flail; could he have heard the throb of the engines that, in obedience to human will, and for the satisfaction of human desire, exert a power greater than that of all the men and all the beasts of burden of the earth combined; could he have seen the forest trees transformed into finished lumber—into doors, sashes, blinds, boxes, or barrels, with hardly the touch of human hand; the great workshops where boots and shoes are turned out by the case with less labor than the old-fashioned cobbler could have put on a sole; the factories where, under the eye of a girl, cotton becomes cotton cloth faster than hundreds of stalwart weavers could have turned it out with their hand-loom; could he have seen steam hammers shaping mammoth shafts and mighty anchors, and delicate machinery making tiny watches; the diamond drill cutting through the heart of the rocks, and coal oil sparing the whale—what would he have thought?

“ Out of these bounteous material conditions



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he would have seen arising, as necessary sequence, moral conditions realizing the golden age of which mankind have always dreamed. Youth no longer stunted and starved; age no longer harried by avarice; the child at play with the tiger; the man with the muck-rake drinking in the glory of the stars! Foul things fled, fierce things tame, discord turned into harmony! For how could there be greed where all had enough? How could the vice, the crime, the ignorance, the brutality that spring from poverty and the fear of poverty, exist where poverty had vanished? Who could crouch where all were free-men? Who oppress where all were peers?" His whole book is a wail of disappointment; and yet this is just what we should have expected. Wealth alone can never bring in the golden age. "Gold is good, but a good man is better than gold."

They trust in strength and might.

The most impressive spot I have ever found in the world is Bonaparte's tomb in Paris. Its great golden dome is above the lesser



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buildings for miles in every direction. Entering the great rotunda, on the right hand and left, there are the sarcophagi of Egyptian marble, in which his two brothers sleep. Towering for one hundred feet above you is the inner side of the great dome, lined with battle flags, that have been carried to victory all over Europe. Reverently we uncover our heads, draw near the centre, and look down into the crypt, full seventy-five feet in diameter, where the Emperor sleeps. About him are the bullet-rent flags that told of one hundred battlefields—Waterloo alone is missing. It is the grandest tomb in the world. And whether you are there on Sunday or week-day, in early morning or late at night, a great throng is always passing before the bier. Men, and women, and children, with uncovered head, and there is never a sound heard, save that of sobbing. Napoleon has been dead wellnigh a hundred years, and yet the people of France weep every day by his grave, and at the head of the coffin the French sentry is always on guard.



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Overcome with memory, and emotion, I said, Here at last is fame. This man lives all over France. You hear "The Emperor" on the lips of the people as often as you hear the words "The King" in England or "The President" in America. There is nothing known like the reverence of the French people for the "Little Corsican." And yet his is a dying fame. The sound of his name wakens storm passions in the breast, and white-faced women utter it when they buckle on swords, and send their loved ones to war. Martial France remembers Napoleon. But the intellect of France, the scholarship of France, the liberty of France, and the religion of France, day by day are teaching the French people to forget. When the war drums throb no longer, when the battle flags are furled, instead of sobbing there will be only the sighing of the wind: instead of fresh flowers there will be only the bloodless bronze: instead of the tramp of many feet, grass will grow on the path that leads to the Emperor's grave. The soldier will be forgotten. The



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man who lived chiefly to weave a crown for himself will be lost in oblivion.

Men put their trust in political systems.

When the statesman appears, they imagine, or the platform becomes our government policy, or we adopt the socialist's programme, or some other, then cured will be all the ills that flesh is heir to. The Puritans promised that for their commonwealth, and the Cavaliers promised it for their restored Stuarts. Both in due time came, and still unfulfilled was the dream of Englishmen.

The Jews had a full score of Messiahs, and all of them were kings; they all failed to bring in the glory of Israel. When the real Messiah did come, He was too humble for them to recognize Him, and still they look for a king who will come. And if he were to come, he would bring only another disappointment.

"Establish the Declaration of Independence," said the men of the Revolution, "gain national independence, and America will gain the Golden Age." They gained national in-



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dependence. The king went out, and in the same day the mob came in. America, the baby among nations, became the prey of the nations. Our last estate was worse than our first.

Trusting to mere governmental policy, our fathers said, "Bring Jefferson into the chief magistracy, and we will bring in peace and prosperity." They brought in Jefferson, and they brought in the era of strife, and the Virginia dynasty, and foreign war also.

"A more democratic President" was the slogan of our fathers, when they chose, with a mighty clamor, Andrew Jackson. And they got absolutism in the White House, and the spoils system entrenched in the public service. It would be the same now if we were to adopt the Socialist's scheme. If our citizenship remains the same in greed, and corruption, and self-seeking, whatever the scheme, we will have civic corruption and commercial greed. He who pins his hopes for a better day to a political system leans on a broken staff, and will find both his ideal and himself



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in the dirt. The people at last get a government which is of their own quality. It is not, and cannot be long, better than they themselves are, nor worse. Their government is as good as they deserve. The government of angels set up in hell would not change the temperature one single degree. And the government of Dante's Inferno, set up in his Paradiso, would not make the angels err.

There is a better way. There is a higher law. The story of the Old Man of the Mountains declares it. A man becomes at last what he loves.

Here is the secret of character. Here is the mystery of life.

For a long time men went hungry, and, all the time, there was plenty in the ground.

For a long time men shivered for warmth, and, all the time, there was coal under the hills for the digging.

For a long time men wanted a pack horse to carry their burdens, and, all the time, giants were chained in every flowing river.

Men are sighing for the great life, and say-



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ing we will have the great life only when wealth comes, or when the soldier comes, or when the statesman comes. Ernest was sighing for the great life, and was striving for the great life, and lo! he himself was the great life.

Men always become what they love. Heroism lies in the individual: and greatness lies in personal character.

Life is the building of a soul.

After gazing in awe at the Old Man of the Mountains; after dwelling for the hundredth time on the story; I made it the work of a Summer to study the people.

Under the guise of a fisherman, I talked to the people of the farm houses. As a Summer visitor, a "rusticator" they called me, I dwelt a week here, and a month there, among the villages of the hills.

Wandering along a lonesome road, right in the heart of a forest, I came upon a cleared patch, with horse-sheds on it and the best and largest building that I had seen in the section. I asked the workman what it was, think-



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ing of a country inn, or a Consumptives' Home.

"It is the Town House," he replied.

"But it is far from everybody and everywhere. There is not a house within two miles," I cried in astonishment. He could not make anything out of my wonder. "It is the exact center of the town," he said. "The four villages, B., East B., West B., and North B. are equally distant."

Yes, these were all on terms of perfect equality, even in the matter of inconvenience. It was a democracy in hardship, as well as government. If everybody had to take a Sabbath Day's journey to get to town meeting, everybody had a right to speak and vote, when he did get there. The New England town meeting was called by Thomas Jefferson "the cradle of all our liberties."

I asked to see the chief man of the town. They did not know what I meant. Or if they did, they would not let on. There is nobody in the world can be so ignorant as a New



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England Yankee, when it suits his purpose. "Dumb as an oyster!" An oyster is a talking machine as compared with one of these Down East Yankees, when his interlocutor is a city stranger, whom he regards as curious. His silences are eloquent however. By learning to listen, I read their inner thoughts. And so, by what they did not say, and by their actions, I found out the great men of the town.

They were neither the owner of the marble quarry, nor the Congressman. They were both counted rich, and so had a right to public office. But they moulded not public opinion: they followed it.

The rulers of the town, and the great personages, of whom every man, woman, and child were proud, in their silent, unexpressive way, were the Deacon; a sea captain; and a very old man they called Ira.

I found out that they revered the sea captain for his thrift and blunt honesty; the Deacon because he, and his father, and grandfather had been Deacons in the "orthodox"



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church for one hundred years, and all of them, in sterling character, were worthy of the office.

But Ira was the glory of the town. They would have taken off their hats to him, only that was against their Roundhead principles. The children spoke of him as Ira; but the way they uttered the word it meant "saint" or "His majesty."

Ira was very old. "Ninety-six years old" they said. He looked and talked like sixty. He was as lank as Uncle Sam, as tall and straight as the pine of his native Maine. He had the common sense and wit of Hosea Biglow; and with it the culture, the poetic vision, and the voice, "which was that of an angel," of Ralph Waldo Emerson.

At the first glance, I recognized him as Hawthorne's Ernest, the Old Man of the Mountain. Every line of the intelligence and the nobleness was there. He was to the country both hero and oracle.

He was the old schoolmaster. For sixty years he had been principal of the village Academy.



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He had been the teacher of five hundred college men and women. And the village had at no time ever contained so many inhabitants. What became of the old man's scholars?

A few facts are known—Six had been missionaries, twelve journalists, fifty lawyers, seventy physicians, eighty ministers, one hundred teachers. One was Vice-President of the Nation. Four had been United States Senators. Two Major-Generals, eleven Congressmen, five Supreme Judges, three College Presidents, have been among them.

The schoolmaster of the hills has laid his hand upon his age, and, from his isolation, been a ruler of his country. The rulers of our country have not always been our Presidents. Rarely have they ruled us: they have obeyed. The rulers have been the makers of public opinion and manhood, like Greeley and Beecher in the city, and Mark Hopkins and Ira, schoolmasters of the hills.

Heroism lies in character. And in all character making, the Ideal is master of the Real.



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Men at last become what they love. So far have we come.

Let us then go on to see that it is shallow to associate heroism with camp and court: and it is blindness not to see that we dwell daily among and are companions of the great. We will become wise, when we know that for heroism there is no place like our common life.

To make this plain, I have shown you the silhouettes of a few unknown friends. Out of your observation, you can add to the company. Who are they? The farmer, the minister, the pioneer, the mother, who is greatest, and the schoolmaster, who is last, but not least. These come from the schools wherein heroes and heroines are trained; and they are schools that are open to all.

For men, who are looking for a mission, rather than a career in life, it would be worth while to view the vast powers and responsibilities of the schoolmaster.

The New Testament wisely lingers over one, Gamaliel, teacher of Paul. Aristotle, Seneca,



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Abelard, Newton, Froebel, schoolmasters all, would glorify any calling.

When I was a boy I was much puzzled over the oft recurring name of Socrates. I could not find that he had won any battles, or had grown fabulously rich, or had killed anybody. And yet people talked about him. The very people on the street, though they did not know the name of any other person of that dim and far off time, did know about Socrates and had remembered him five hundred years longer than Christ. What was the secret of his never waning fame?

The first thing that I found out about him was that he was an old schoolmaster who lived four hundred and eighty-four years before Christ. There are a full hundred stories about this man, and a full thousand facts known of his life, but this is the one supreme fact—he was a great schoolmaster. He was the world's first great teacher. It is this fact that gives him his fame.

He did not begin life that way. He was bred to the profession of his father, who was a



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sculptor, and he worked at this calling until he was past forty years old. The world then belonged to creative genius: the artist was king. Eschylus and Sophocles were fascinating their first audiences. Phidias was making a copy for all art. Pericles was ruling Athens with sweet speech. The sculptor stood in the gateway of great honor. Socrates knew it. He looked his opportunity for wealth and fame full in the face, and then threw off his leathern apron and paper cap, dropped his mallet and chisel, and turned school teacher. The man left off marble for flesh and blood. He deliberately sacrificed a career for a mission.

I can match that story out of our own American life. In 1848 John Quincy Adams died in the speaker's room in Washington. Like his father he had been President of the United States. As ex-President he had long been in Congress, where for years he was the Nestor of the House, as he was the pride of Massachusetts.

That state then sought out her worthiest



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man to succeed her greatest son. She, by wellnigh unanimous voice, chose a Boston lawyer, named Horace Mann. He was fifty years old, cultured, honored of all, and an orator with a silver tongue. He had been born in the hill town of Franklin, which was the first country town to have a village library. It was the gift of Benjamin Franklin to the first town named after him. He had had poverty for his nurse, and a noble woman for his mother. His other mother was Brown University. Again and again did this old Bay State send him to Washington. He was on the threshold of a great career in public life. He was first choice for the post which Charles Sumner afterwards filled. His friends were fairly stunned when he turned his back on this dazzling career, and took up the old task of securing education for the people. He became Secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Education. The salary was a pittance; he locked his law office forever and lived on it. The labors were herculean; but he bowed himself to his task



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with a song in his heart. He met with indifference and lethargy, and afterwards, scorn, hatred, and persecution. His lifelong friends called him a fanatic. But he went cheerfully on with his burden, and his face did shine as one who has seen a vision.

And he had seen a vision. God had revealed to him the truth that he who builds a man, builds for eternity. The gratitude of children will outlast all other fame. The teacher is the true ruler of society. So he found the schools of Massachusetts few, feeble, and failures. He left them renewed, strong, conquering like an army with banners. Horace Mann is the greatest name in our educational history. From him dates the common school revival in the United States. He has left his name on all lips and his mark on all the states.

That is what history says.

It is also the answer of current experience. I do not know of a more heroic figure in America to-day than that of a poor negro school teacher.



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I have seen him at the feast day of the nation, and the throngs were impatient with poet, orator, and President, and were all quivering to hear the black man.

And when he did speak the crowd went wild with enthusiasm. It was not his oratory—though that was matchless. It was his unselfish service, his integrity, his self-sacrifice. By his service as schoolmaster, and in private life, this negro had added a new lustre to the name of Washington.

Sincerity, courage, faith, self-sacrifice are the elements of greatness, whether shining in a senator or a slave. Manhood is the thing—whether in the olden days or our day, in the Bible or out of it, in a statesman of Massachusetts, or a negro school teacher in Alabama.

It is because of the heroism of the man that the people of Boston sent him to Europe, a few days ago, where he was the guest of princes and kings. It was because of the heroism of the man, and his sincerity, and his courage, and his spirit of self-denial, that



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the greatest university in this land, and the oldest, through its president, sent him a letter asking him to become her own child. He tells us that when he received that letter he sat down and mused: "My former life—my life as a slave, my work in the coal mines, the times when I was without food and clothes, when I made my bed under the sidewalk, the dark days when I was trying to make bricks without straw at Tuskegee, ostracism, oftentimes the oppression of my race—all these passed before me, and tears came into my eyes. What was I, the humble black man, who had done what I had done without any thought of fame, but as an instrument for the upbuilding of my poor people, that Harvard University should bestow on me a degree?"

What was he? And all the world speaking, Harvard University, hoary with honor, venerable in learning, honored herself that day when, along with the great and the distinguished, she conferred her diploma upon this



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true man with a great soul beneath his black face.

I tell you heroes are everywhere: and this common ordinary life is God's school for heroism.

When I see the noble service of men and women about me, and know that the blind and selfish world sees it not, but calls them ordinary folk in ordinary life, I grow impatient for the Judgment Day. Then the truth will be known. In the white light of the Resurrection, purple, and fine linen, gold and gems, and the tinsel crowns of earth will shrivel, and fade, and disappear. But faithfulness, and courage, and service, and sincerity will shine like the stars. Many, who in this present time have been forgotten and despised, who have done their duty, and lived for others, will be surprised, as David was when the prophet called him to be king. I think these modest souls will be covered with confusion and embarrassment. But how the assembled ages will shout when God shall single out mothers, and fathers, and teach-



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ers, and toilers, and common folk, saying:  
“Ye have been faithful over a few things,  
I will make thee ruler over many things.”

*“We live in deeds, not years ; in thoughts, not  
breaths ;  
In feelings, not in figures on a dial.  
We should count time by heart throbs. He  
most lives  
Who thinks most, feels the noblest, acts the  
best.”*



